

# ON THREE BATTLE FRONTS



*by*

PRIVATE FRED HOWARD. *Anzac*



To Mr F. A. Powell  
With the compliments  
of his  
American ally  
The Publisher





# On Three Battle Fronts



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WILLIAM A. HOWARD    CLARENCE V. HOWARD    FRED HOWARD  
Wounded at            Killed at            Wounded at  
Gallipoli            Gallipoli            Gallipoli

HOWARD BROTHERS  
At Broadmeadows Training Camp, Melbourne.



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# ON THREE BATTLE FRONTS

BY  
PRIVATE  
FRED HOWARD

OF THE AUSTRALIAN AND CANADIAN FORCES

ILLUSTRATED



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To Woodrow Wilson,  
The President of the United States,  
America's Inspiring Leader  
in the Great War  
in which it was my privilege to serve,

To my Comrades In Arms,

and

To one other,  
"The Queen of My Heart"

this book is cordially dedicated.





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## Fred Howard—Anzac

Frederick Thomas Rowland Howard was born in 1887 in the heart of the Australian "Bush", in the town of Lillidale—"the prettiest town on earth" if we may believe him—and already famous as the birthplace of Mme. Melba. His father, Thomas Robert Howard, was a retired lawyer of English parentage, and his mother, Clara Hathaway Howard, of French and English extraction, claiming descent on the English side from the family of Anne Hathaway.

Fred Howard was chosen by his parents to follow his father's profession and was educated in Melbourne with this in view, graduating from The English Grammar School of that city with a B.A. Degree, in 1907. At this time, however, his love of outdoor life asserted itself so strongly that he gave up his intended career to play professional football.

The following year he toured Australia, South Africa and the British Isles with the "Australian Wallobys" playing many exhibition football matches, and left the team in England, to travel in Spain, South America, the United States and Canada for pleasure.

Upon his return to Australia, Howard went back to "Bush" life and the plains, where he tried his hand at many forms of outdoor life varying from lumbering to sheep shearing and horse-breaking.

At the outbreak of the war Fred Howard, then 27 years of age, had not yet "found his groove" and was free to answer the first call for men. Dropping his work of horsebreaking, he went at once to Melbourne

and there enlisted with his twin brother, William Alfred Howard, who was later wounded at Gallipoli, and his younger brother Clarence Victor Howard who was killed on the second day of that ill-fated campaign.

Since his return from the front Private Howard has devoted his entire time and strength to Red Cross and Liberty Loan work where many of the readers of this book have had the opportunity of hearing from his own lips some of the experiences and adventures recounted in the following pages.

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## Introduction

I have not tried to record herein any of the historical events of the Great War, but merely set down my own experiences as a soldier for three years on three battle fronts.

I confess a feeling of pride has come over me at the thought that I have been already privileged to go through what thousands of young Americans have still before them in order that this great struggle for democracy may be gloriously concluded. The recollection of my many months service in No-man's-Land brings with it a certain sense of contentment in the consciousness that the Great Cause has been furthered, though only a little, by my efforts.

It was in Australia that I first joined the colors in response to Kitchener's call—a step which gave me ample opportunity for adventure; but my reunion with the Canadians in 1916 was a duty I owed to posterity—a duty made vivid, insistent, real, by the haunting thoughts of my slain brother, thoughts which were always present with me till I obeyed the

great impulse that led me to the Western battlefields of France.

Now I am in the discard after eleven months of hospital treatment—and yet I feel as if my task were not yet all fulfilled. My blood pulses and climbs to fever pitch when I recall the ruin, the abominations wrought by Kaiserism, and if this modest work of mine but stirs its readers to a fervent patriotism and brings home to them the supreme importance of safeguarding the world of the future against the domination of the Hun, then I shall consider myself amply repaid for the labor of its making.

yours faithfully  
Fred. Howard.



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## The Call

IF the Sphinx had spoken after thousands of years of silence proclaiming Armageddon could it have been received with greater reverence than Kitchener's bugle call for 100,000 from the youngest democracy on this globe—Australia? Looking down the historic corridors of the past, I believe such invitation to accept of wholesale adventure unparalleled. An opportunity to serve in Kitchener's army in the "big adventure" was the sort of chance that comes but once in a lifetime, and to such an extent was it accepted that the full quota of men for the first Expeditionary Force formed a representative body of men—in number, from the coastal cities to the land of the never-never where men exist under the regime of "There's lots of time." Who, indeed, with red blood in his veins, could resist the magnetic pull of this immortal genius—Kitchener of Khartoum? His request was for men—men whose lives were unhampered by domestic cares, whose bodies were strong and fit, and thus it was he drew the cream of Australia, men capable of accomplishing feats

ordinarily deemed impossible, but now familiarly associated with the name Anzac.

A gigantic work such as this, undertaken without preparation, naturally swamped the hastily appointed administrative Officers and offices; but with inexhaustible vim and sincere endeavor Australia met her obligations in a manner satisfactory considering the circumstances.

I was one of those who accepted this opportunity to enlist, and on being declared physically fit by a dozen or so Doctors, I climbed into a horrible ill-fitting suit of "dungarees" and staved off the rays of the sun with a white soft cloth hat whose inclination it seemed, was to emulate the lines usually associated with a wet sock. A comedy soldier was created, and anything but a soldierly appearance did the wearer present. Charlie Chaplin is justly noted for his ludicrously ill-fitting clothes, but had a movie man been present with his machine on the occasion of which I speak, I doubt whether a certain film star would have had such a lengthy run in starland. Nevertheless, it was the great call which held us, ready for any field where our General thought fit to place us.

Prior to enlisting I had experienced life in

many phases. Farming, sheep-breeding, droving, shearing, and professional football being only a few of the occupations that I had followed in the wild endeavor to find the groove for which I was designed.

### **Broadmeadows**

To train and discipline and drill a body of carefree Australians, as unprepared as were these men, was a stupendous undertaking. There in the Broadmeadows camp, where I gleaned my first knowledge of "forming fours" and "right-about-turn," were cattle men, shearers, railroad men and a host of other poorly clad fellows representing a thousand industries and occupations.

Picture hundreds of these rookies in this motley attire, endeavoring to "form fours" and hopelessly getting into a mess which could only be adjusted by the men themselves on being ordered by an officer "As you were"; and what humiliation they suffered at the hands of our seemingly heartless officers. A button unfastened was always a great opening for a severe remark such as "Fall out, number three,

and dress yourself," and with dragging step and unmistakable signs of disgust on his countenance, number three would advance and follow the Officer's instructions,—a proceeding which to our minds was quite remote from the proper duties of an Australian soldier.

All the preparatory work at Broadmeadows had to be performed by the first contingent men. There was nothing else to commence with but a piece of level ground; to construct thereon a suitable encampment for thousands of men was a task which tried the skill and patience of the executive Officers as well as the men themselves. Sleeping on the bare ground was not considered too harsh treatment by these men of adventure, but when it rained, before our tents were provided with catchment drains for surface water, something like bedlam was created, as all tents were filled to their utmost capacity, and once the wet tent was touched from the inside the rain would come through at that particular point on to the unfortunate below. However it was good training for what one has to endure out in France even these days in the front line trenches.

My love of horses was responsible for my

"joining up" with the artillery in order that I might be close to the best dumb friend that every man had.

Good horses were scarce, and in the Government's wild endeavor to get sufficient horse flesh for the artillery it combed the mountain tops and the outlying stations. It was in this manner that many a wild "brumby" was sent into the city of Melbourne to contribute its mite towards the great adventure. Under such circumstances a horse which afterwards became famous in our battery was brought into the company. He was only an Australian "brumby", no doubt, but his intelligence and spirit were marked. He was almost instantly named "Roman Nose" because of the pronounced curve in his nose and forehead which time proved housed the best brain ever a horse had. His tail was long and trailing, his mane unkempt and the flash in his eyes showed the temper of the animal to any man who knew horse flesh. All the horses were handled easily enough except Roman Nose, but notwithstanding his spirit, his mane and tail were successfully bobbed, and his coat was sometimes even brushed over by an attendant.

A week or two of drill robbed most of us of the peculiarities of our former business in life; the drover lost his easy swagger; the stockman, his bow legs; and the city clerk his paleness, till we presented that appearance of bronzed and robust manhood which has to-day become familiar in America.

A month had elapsed when orders were issued that all men were to present themselves for khaki suits and other equipment belonging to a real Australian soldier. It was welcome news, you may believe. An ancient Roman toga could not have had more folds in it than had some of those temporary uniforms, handed out to the first hundred thousand Australians. High spirits prevailed throughout the camp, among the men who were sick of the sight of those white soft hats and blue dungarees, deemed so unbecoming as to prevent many of us from leaving the camp grounds except under the camouflage of a great coat of the orthodox type. But a transformation was brought about when our uniforms were distributed and it hardly need be recorded that blue dungarees lay around indiscriminately for many days afterwards.



Quite unruly I believe we were in many ways in those days. Discipline had been farthest from our minds when the call for the great adventure was heard. But by this time we were sufficiently disciplined, at least to lead an officer to the belief that he might be able to make something someday of the boys under his care.

Fights were frequent among the boys, and it took very little to bring about an appeal to the court of bare fists. In fact, pugilistic encounters were being staged all the time; so our Officers introduced boxing gloves and a standard ring in order that the fights might be conducted along proper lines, i. e. according to the Australian rules of boxing. In this way many interesting amateur battles were satisfactorily decided without undue brutality.

One of the chief things which brought about these fights was the presence of a bunch of dare-devils who paraded the grounds as official camp hair-cutters. Their equipment was a box, a sheet and a nice little bag which contained nothing other than a very blunt and defective pair of horse clippers. Most of the men in camp wore their hair short, but there were certain chaps—"dandies" we called them



—who persisted in evading the shears. The usual method of our barbers then was to seize on one of these dandies and forcibly subject him to the trimming of his locks. Outnumbered three to one, Mr. Dude did not have a chance in the world, so they usually took the operation in fairly good part and only asked that a reasonably decent job be made of his head. That, of course, was readily promised. So on to the box he went and was presently swathed in the sheet. One drive with the clippers from the nape of the neck right over to the forehead usually constituted a full hair-cut, to the delight of onlookers and the satisfaction of the hair-cutters. The abused one would usually retaliate with fight, but as Officers by this time were plentiful, all such scenes had to be staged for the benefit of the boys; and so our amusement went on.

The shaving men, however, were worse yet. Their procedure was conducted entirely by force. First a rich lather of flour and water was mixed and brushed on. After dragging a hoop-iron razor over their victim's face to the accompaniment of unmerciful groans from the sufferer, a blistering hot wire was drawn swiftly

around his throat. Instantly he would endeavor to reach the sun. "My God; I didn't think the razor was sharp enough to cut his throat so badly," the barber would innocently remark. Many a poor youth, bewildered in this manner and thinking he had been done for, would set out on a run in the direction of the medical tent with the lather of flour and water still sticking to his face.

The humiliation of drill was lifting a little as time ran along, because we were learning to really do things; then too rumors were prevalent that the boys would have only a little while longer before enjoying the sport of real battle. When we heard that, we were willing to salute a post another thousand times without complaining of the monotony of the proceeding.

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## Aboard The "A9"

"Final Leave"—who is the soldier who does not understand what those words mean? Early in October, 1914, the gravity of those words became quite apparent to us all. A million farewells were said to relatives, sweethearts and friends—if indeed one was fortunate enough to have them near at hand. Sailing day was not, however, definitely fixed, as it was obvious that the date of departure from Australian waters must be kept secret, to elude the German raider Emden, who was plying her "trade" somewhere in the Indian Ocean. We had "last" nights in town for a week or so, and then almost doubting the probability of our ever actually leaving Melbourne, we were at last startled by the order to be in readiness at 4:30 A. M. on the 20th of October. Orders were to proceed "on shanks ponies" to the point of embarkation some 15 miles distant, but the Artillery was so fortunate as to possess enough broken horses to ride the distance—to the great envy and admiration of the Infantrymen. A

string of transports were awaiting us at the piers, and after being endlessly, as it seemed to us, counted and recounted we were ordered to load our equipment on to the S. S. Shropshire which was known better as the "A9". The horses were loaded in slips and hurriedly taken on with the aid of the winches. An hour or two was sufficient to take all the necessities on board, and by 8 o'clock we were in good shape for pushing off from the pier and laying out into the stream.

No doubt it would be hard on mothers, sisters and sweethearts when next they went to visit the camp at Broadmeadows to find that their soldier boy had departed, and hard it was also on the boys to be burdened with the duty of silence. Under no circumstances were soldiers allowed to approach telegraph office or 'phone box in order to say the last farewell to their home folks, quietly performing customary home duties without dreaming of the changed whereabouts of their boys. Many of these lads were now swallowing hard lumps in their throats as the glorious light of the Australian skies proclaimed another day flooded with sunshine.

The whistle blew, gang planks were drawn up and hawsers cast off from the piers as slowly but surely we moved away from the dock and were at last on our way to fight the Germans on some yet unknown frontier. Quietly the transports slipped out of Port Melbourne with their loads of human freight swaying uneasily to the every movement of the great steamers. Many men were afloat for the first time in their lives, and if I had been a student of psychology I should have been greatly interested in the childlike actions of some of those "gumleaf huskies." Some became sea sick even before we had got out of the harbor, whilst others,—myself included—were stricken with a malady quite as serious, perhaps, namely home-sickness. With me it was not so bad as with some others, for I had previously been to England, South America, the United States and Canada; but on this errand of strange adventure I was not immune from a very lively presentiment that I might never see the sunny shores of the receding land again. A band on board came to the rescue of us all, and after "Tipperary" and other war-time tunes we "bucked up" sufficiently to sniff with pleasure


the salt sea air. The decks were still smothered with men in khaki, some of them waving handkerchief or flag in the forlorn hope of attracting some friend's attention. Tug boats saluted us as we moved slowly down the stream, and ferry-boats and smaller craft were ready with a hearty "Good luck, boys," as we passed them.

When evening arrived our positions were allotted to us in the hammocks which swung from the deckhead in our "mess" rooms. "Mess" was in reality any spare space in which an eating table could be arranged and a hammock suspended over the same.

We did not know to what port we were sailing, and our only hope lay in the possibility that the sealed orders would eventually take us to England, from which point we would be distributed to the various battlefields.


At a point arranged by wireless somewhere off the coast of West Australia, all the transports from the various states and also from New Zealand met, and here we came. It looked like a family meeting of ships taking place under the ever watchful eye of a couple of cruisers hovering far away on the horizon.





Positions were allotted to the various transports; instead of us rookies having to form straight lines, this time the ships' captains were responsible for the orderly alignment of three columns comprising 52 transports. Here and there and everywhere were battleships and cruisers, so it seemed to us at any rate, so rapidly did they move about. Viewed from an aeroplane this scene must have been most impressive. From my position on the "A9" it seemed as if the boats stretched from horizon to horizon, and the smoke towered up through the balmy air toward the blue dome above.

### **Sinking of the Emden**



German chivalry at this time was not yet totally extinct. We were continually in touch with boats that had been pursued by the cruiser Emden, and they reported that when the pirate overtook its prey all passengers were allowed a reasonable time in which to transfer valuables to another boat under German command before a shell was sent through the bows of the unfortunate ship. This procedure may have been



caused by the realization, on the part of the Emden's Commanding Officer that escape was hopeless; but, be that as it may, his methods show decency as compared with the brutalities one always associates with the Huns these later days of the Great War.

The 9th of November is a day I link closely in mind with the brief history of our sojourn on the Australian continent, for it was on that day that the Emden met her match and master in the diminutive craft, H. M. A. S. Sydney. The morning in question was a glorious one, the horizon unbroken except for a speck which might have been the coast line of some distant island or a trader deeply laden. Our transport steamed on majestically and one might have dreamed it was some old Spanish galleon working its course across uncharted seas. Far ahead was a Japanese cruiser and it was her duty I suppose to challenge this speck of a steamboat; but the latter dipping the Union Jack and hiding her true character behind a dummy funnel was permitted to pass unmolested. The next ship to question her was the H. M. A. S. Sydney. Owing to an unsatisfactory answer as to her identity, the little "Sydney"

proceeded to overhaul her. The Emden immediately changed her course and gave the "Sydney" a running fight, but so accurate was the firing of the lads from back home that what was the "Emden" now lies in a tangled mass of steel stranded at the water's edge of Cocus Island. Later, upon arrival in Egypt, I had a feeling of pride, on looking over a copy of London "Punch," to find a cartoon depicting Australia as a young lion with the "Emden" as its prey and underneath, the words "Good Hunting."

Australia's navy, though small, was now a factor in the war, and later on the exploits of one of her submarines, the A2, again brought John Bull, Sr. to the salute in recognition of his youngest son's accomplishment. This U boat, an old craft of underwater fame, accomplished a feat worthy of mention by the historians of the Great War. After successfully traveling from Australia to the Eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea, she proceeded to Gallipoli and from there up the mine-laden narrows into the Sea of Marmora, from which point she went to Constantinople and wrought havoc right under the eyes of the Turkish forts,—then re-

turned safely through the minefields in the narrows to her naval base.

To return to the "Emden." It was the clicking of the wireless instruments that brought us the news of the sinking. A holiday was proclaimed throughout the entire convoy as a fitting mark of appreciation to the blue jackets from the antipodes. So gladdened were the hearts of the boys that hoarse throats were general because of the patriotic singing which followed. The crowded deck drills and setting up exercises were all called off and all were privileged passengers enjoying themselves as they pleased, after partaking of a few extras served in honor of the occasion. Then once again we proceeded along our course in the spectacular three-line formation.

Later it transpired that a few prisoners were taken from the Emden debris. These were placed on our flagship where they were cheered on arrival as a worthy enemy contented to accept what Fate lay in store for them at the hands of their conquerors. They were subsequently taken to Colombo, where minor repairs were effected upon the "Sydney"—for she did not escape "Scot Free."

### **"Without Leave"**

On our arrival at Colombo the displeasing news was posted that all shore leave was cancelled. Now, I wished very much to go ashore. The only way of "making the grade" was for me to lower myself down a hawser that trailed invitingly over the stern of the ship on which I felt myself interned. This I did. At the other end of the hawser there was a lighter manned by natives, who could not comprehend anything till I slipped them a shilling, and then they were men who fully understood my desire, and without further ado they rowed me to the shore, inquiring in very good English when I would be returning. These natives were clothed just sufficiently to evade the law and were vile smelling creatures.

After having seen the city, and loaded up with mementoes of my visit—ivory elephants (that never saw a tusk), ostrich fans and bric-a-brac, I endeavored to return to the ship by the same boat which carried me across the stream. They were temporarily absent, but I subsequently located them by their yelling lest I should employ some other boatman. On

again presenting the shilling tip, the niggers rowed me enthusiastically to the ship. Stepping on to the gang-plank I waved them adieu, not, however, before the Colonel was attracted by their presence and leaning over the rail of the ship caught sight of me, coming up with my armful of souvenirs. Five minutes after that I remember distinctly a red carpet which decorated the floor of the Colonel's private room, and I might mention emphatically that the receding shores of Colombo were not seen by me as I had other duties to perform—in a dark room—the chief one being to find a pin on the floor after the same had been thrown at the bulkhead of my private "State Room."

Aden was the next port of call; a barren and parched stopping point. It is known to tourists only for the cheapness of the Birmingham wares to be found there in the hands of the natives who palm them off to the unsuspecting travelers as their own creations. The Hebrew has a certain personality which lends itself successfully to the clinching of a bargain, but these natives can outpoint him in the craft of salesmanship.

### Fortune Smiles

Six weeks came to an end when Port Said was reached. I had grown naturally tired of the confinement on board ship and decided to again make port under any circumstances, despite the fact that orders had been issued forbidding shore leave. So we devised a plan whereby eighteen men left the ship disguised in oilers' and firemen's clothes, likewise a goodly portion of coal dust. A little camouflage on our faces completed the disguise, and lo; the feat was accomplished with ease. The inconvenience we were to suffer by reason of those dirty clothes never dawned upon our minds. The very natives, suspicious of our character, declined to associate with us whilst a stray officer was in sight (whose excuse for shore leave by the way was always sufficiently serious to allow him to go ashore and bring souvenirs on board from the various bazaars). All explanations and the use of the most eloquent oratory failed to convince any person living in Port Said that the soldier-stokehold workers were anything but half breeds from Singapore or the Malay Straits, and it was because of such



discouraging experiences that the little band decided to again return to the ship at an early hour. Meantime, suspicion on board ship had arisen, and an investigation had been made for missing men. It was quickly found that several men were short. The presence of a knot of Officers and the Colonel at the top of the gang plank was a distressing sight for the wanderers. It was 1 A. M. according to the ship's time; the men were tired of being in their greasy clothes so in spite of the menace of the Officers presence we unanimously decided to make a bold stand, file up the gang plank and try to pass the guards. There was a powerful light adjusted so as to shine into the face of anyone going aboard. Up we went, and I could see as each reached the last step his commanding Officer pounce upon him and ask his name; and before he could answer generally one of the Officers of his division had him pinned down. Those names given on the spur of the moment were amusing; they ranged from Abdul Hamid to Bill Jones. I happened to wait till the last, and as Providence would have it two bona fide firemen had just preceded me up the gang plank. Having a keen realization



of the danger awaiting me, I pulled down my felt hat on one side, closed my eye on the other side and prepared for the big show-down. The two firemen were passed after a casual examination of their horny hands; so when it came my turn I mumbled some improvised foreign name, passed along as a matter of course, and to my great surprise was marked off the list as the third fireman.

Seventeen men proved themselves not grumblers when twenty-one days field punishment was given them on arrival in Egypt.

It is on record, however, that the Colonel threw himself down upon the sands of the desert in a fit of something or other when he was told that I was amongst the camouflaged men who came aboard that night, defied scrutiny, and passed muster as a plain fireman.

### **A City of Lost Ideals**

At last Alexandria was reached after a long voyage which took toll of about 30 men and 50 horses. It is a sad and impressive sight to see a funeral at sea—at least on the occasion of which I write. The ship having to perform

this solemn duty would drop out of line, heave to, and lower the dead man's body, wrapped in the Union Jack, over the side. During the ceremony all would stand at attention, salutes were fired, and altogether it was something that left its mark on the minds of these carefree boys setting out on the great adventure.

To those who have not traveled I would say, Alexandria is a seaport where the decadent nationalities of the world meet, as it seems purposely, to entertain the tourists; and it is generally speaking more satisfactory to be seated cozily in a chair and read from some fluent author a vivid description of the pursuits and lost ideals of these people, than to investigate for oneself. In this manner one is not inconvenienced by the physical presence of vile smelling natives. I say "natives" reluctantly, for to endeavor to classify them would be to court trouble. They are unshod, unclean, and alive with vermin, and delight in trading off varnished rubbish to unsuspecting tourists, as their own native handiwork. One must admit that things are cheap in this quarter of the globe but to be sure of cleanliness one might better describe than collect the goods sold by these people

of the Suez Canal Zone. Artists can enjoy the crumbling masses of masonry and picture in vivid colors the quaint streets with their bunting effects, but where disease is so prevalent the less said of beautiful environment the better.

### **"The Sink of the World"**

A modern automobile in the midst of the ruins of Rome would not be expected to blend with the antique character of that historic place, and in a similar way one's mind glimpses the intrusion of modern life into the darkened centuries, in the presence of the little train built to foster and feed the curiosity of tourists traveling between Alexander and Cairo. This train we took to Cairo.

Filthily robed Arabs straying hither and thither with no apparent purpose in existence, impress one with the notion that they are in search of an unattainable ideal which demands their presence now on the horizon coming in one's direction and again later on the horizon departing from one's sight.

The dusty hot journey in a railroad carriage resembling a horse car, proved nevertheless

most interesting. We tumbled out with stiff limbs at Cairo, and now it was the privilege of our Australian Contingent to delve into the ancient history of the world.

"The Sink of the World," as Cairo has aptly been called, is better described by other pens, so I will not linger too long within the city whose filthy and wretched conditions brought death to many of our healthy, hearty boys.

Light hearted Cairo with its decadents combined from the corners of the world seemed to imagine a large picnic was being conducted by the British Government for their recreation. Male and female spies congregated in this social vortex and enjoyed the gaiety with the unsuspecting. The danger was not realized and the most serious thoughts could be brushed aside by the recitation of a poem by Kipling. How frail is human nature in the presence of the sort of excitement that gave charming ladies opportunities for their hostile labors and resulted in so many fine men being recorded amongst the—well, they are dead to the Australians.

Initiation into Cairo's circles demands a clean break with biblical ideals—at least, that is how it appealed to one Australian; and yet tourists

vie with each other as to the breadth and variety of their several experiences, romantically cackling about this colored land with its imperial purples and gorgeous sunset reds.

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## Camp Mena

A thirteen mile march out from the historic city of Cairo, brought us to a little village called Mena, which, by the way is the aristocratic center for visitors to the land of heat, disease, and color. It is located quite near the pyramids and the sphinx. It was about 4 P. M. when I arrived at this point and viewed the wonders of the world by the aid of starlight and a full moon now low in the heavens. It was a moment for red-hot inspiration; a time for poets; but after camp was officially struck an hour later all were ready for sleep, and with the aid of a blanket, a little furrow in the sand and a mound of sand for a pillow, the desert with its chilly night atmosphere could not interfere with the boys' slumber.

The first morning on the desert was one of those impressive occasions when the heart of man responds to a world of glorious color and feels contented in so majestic a setting as is to be found in the vicinity of the greatest wonders extant. On the one hand the pyramids—on the other the sphinx; a cloudless sky overhead, save

for a fleck of white on the horizon, all set against the white sands of the desert which roll on to oblivion!

A bugle calls. Immediately all is bustle; the first steps are taken to form the nucleus of a camp now famous and capable of housing thousands of men under sanitary conditions and in suitable quarters.

Many tedious days were spent in laying pipes for the water supply, erecting temporary offices and shelters, placing in position feed-boxes for the horses, and the thousand and one other duties necessary to get the biggest show on earth under way, and I do believe the system of the Barnum and Bailey people would have saved weeks of time and labor; but system is a product of years and not a thing momentarily arrived at.

Rationed on food of an inferior quality which was continually being tampered with by the Turkish women and paid Arabs; drinking water which was forever being poisoned by the power of German gold; suffering from the unmerciful rays of the sun and the extreme cold of the night air, and marching weary miles upon miles on sand in order to fulfill our drill



orders (so carefully laid down by Kitchener years previously), some of us became so hardened that we were physically fit for any ordeal that might come to the lot of the present day warrior. With others, however, it was too severe; their systems became run down by the change of climate and the strange foodstuffs, and they fell a prey to various kinds of sicknesses that arose from apparently nowhere at all. Probably Kultur was responsible for the presence of the Sandy Blight and the thousand and one other forms of disease. Seldom a day passed without five or six funerals. We marked the place of our comrades' last long rest with little wooden crosses, but now the shifting sands of the desert have wiped out even that memorial, and it may be the Arab in his lonely journeyings across the desert sees before him the bleached bones of some Australian or New Zealand soldier who perished far from friends and home.

As the weeks rolled by, the discipline of the army became stricter, and now the men were fully seasoned to the ideas of duty and obedience—having long ago forgotten the rookie view of a high-handed Officer's manner.

## Desert Mysteries

A wind storm on the desert is an incident in one's career never to be forgotten. Experience has taught the Arabs how to care for themselves under these circumstances. I now understand the pictures to be found in children's books where the tents are very low, being only a few feet high at the roomy end and tapering off to the ground on three sides. It is an ingenious arrangement, for under one of these covers one is comparatively free from the assaults of the dust-laden atmosphere which sweeps over one's head at a hurricane rate. These tents are simple in design and can be hurriedly erected by the Arab philosopher who smells a wind storm coming in his direction. These men of the desert have wonderful natural faculties, as they never use a compass and travel for miles and miles across an unbroken sea of sand which is continually changing in its appearance. It is an undulating wilderness today and tomorrow it is a level plain. No wonder some of our fellows strayed over the horizon into the obscurity.

I have seen, out in Australia, mirages of rip-

pling water nestled amongst trees whose reflection could be clearly seen in the much needed water, but a bush life taught me never to follow one. The nearer one approaches the more distinct appear the silvery forms and vegetation edging the water, and many a famished man has yielded up his life in the hopeless endeavor of securing water from this little trick of nature. In Egypt I was taken off my guard when I first sighted another city, apparently but a mile or so away from camp, but before many of the boys had decided to visit this city with its distant green hills we were informed of its mystery and the hopelessness of ever reaching it. So plainly could it be seen that the superstitious would have called it magic, and in the future when another Citadel was near at hand, or mansions with their majestic water fountains playing delightfully in the Arabian sunlight, we were full of admiration for such airy beauty and eager to watch the ever changing scenes until they vanished, but sought not to make real the ethereal handiwork of nature.

Would that some Australian boys had so viewed the beautiful women who were ever ready to parade with the men. A gayly dressed

form daintily plying to and fro an Eastern fan in order to refresh her ever smiling dimpled face and add charm of grace to her attractive beauty needed little more than inviting eyes for some of our boys to fall foul of poisoned gold cloaked in feminine grace.

A soldier should be part of a machine and not subject to sentimental thoughts or domestic cares. This fact was recognized by Kitchener in refusing to have married men with his Officers in India, as I understand he believed them to be incapable of serving two great purposes of life. Well he knew that a soldier is nourished at the breast of discipline and raised to maturity in thought and action by a strictness which makes men of weaklings and giants of men.

The men of Mena Camp were beginning to become as dark as the robed Arabs and as fit and energetic as the wonderful Arab horse of the desert, whose heart is not subdued by the sand nor the abominable weather in which he lives but who carries his master across the desert at a gallop and lashes the sand to the very heavens themselves.

These steeds, I believe, are the only living

creatures associated with the desert that have pure blood in their veins and from what source it came is a question for historians to ponder over. It is really remarkable to think that the uncouth Arabs have been able to preserve pure the blood of their thoroughbred steeds throughout the long decadent ages of their history.

The camel,—that “ship of the desert”—is certainly a mournful thing on first sight, but on getting better acquainted one is forced to admit that he is not what one first assumes him to be. The physical nature of the camel is quite the reverse of that of the Arab horse, as once their flesh is broken it never heals; and it is a common sight in Egypt to see a much patched camel reminding one of circus comedy by its peculiar appearance. The patch is made of anything that will keep away the flies and weather, and when you see this sewn on to the flesh—or rather skin—of the beast and that too, in a very amateurish manner, you instinctively look around for the futurist who has tampered with the reality of things.

A bite from a camel is poisonous, their peculiar smell is anything but pleasant, and should they drink from the same trough as a horse the

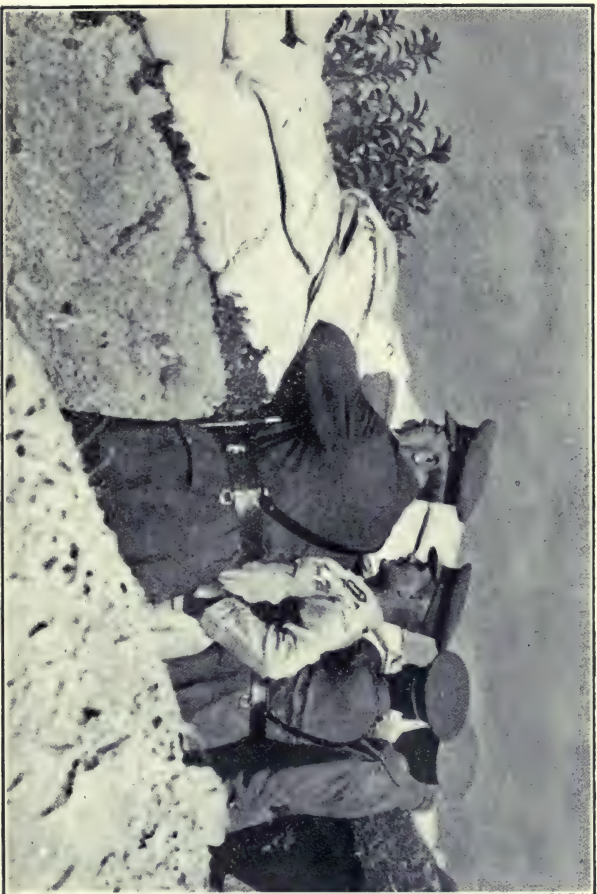
latter is poisoned with some of the germs with which the camel in his long drink charges the water. Having always been fond of horses and not venturing on any new loves, I classified the camel as amongst the unwholesome beasts of the world.

The presence of "cooties" on the desert soon made itself felt, and no calculation in algebra or higher mathematics would measure the rate of multiplication, as once these gentlemen make any kind of a showing, nothing can control them. Men would shrug their shoulders when in line and make other strange motions which, to the initiated, suggested the presence of Mr. Cootie; but when finally said Cootie overtook the Officers' quarters a notice was posted that all men were to be fumigated, and I suppose that if there is a camp at Mena today those fumigation men are still busy with their disinfectants attending to the great duty of camp cleanliness.

### **First Time Under Fire**

It was in March, 1915, that the glad tidings were posted that certain of the Australian and





Lord Kitchener (left) and Gen. Birdwood inspecting Turkish Positions.



New Zealand troops were to oppose the Turks in their march on Suez Canal; for it was thither the German Officers were urging a ragged army of "unspeakable Turks" for the purpose of "cutting the neck of the British Empire."

On arrival at the Canal a great and pleasant surprise was in store for us in the discovery that some troops from India known as Gurkas, were stationed there and had made preparation for our arrival.

Scarcely had we landed, when on the horizon could be seen the invaders in a dark streak, and as they advanced we became aware of the fact that "a ragged Turkish army" was approaching the Canal. On they came across the trackless desert. Little did they dream how warm a reception they would get. A bugle sounded the "Advance," and on we rushed to meet the foremost of the enemy. The British Men-o-War lying in the Canal at once opened fire in conjunction with some stationary batteries belonging to the Indian troops; the air was soon filled with swirling clouds of yellow dust kicked up by the shells, and when the clouds of dust again returning to the desert, the sands could be seen littered with dead Turks. So accurate was

the fire of batteries and battleships that the army of Turks soon had to decamp. Quite a number of prisoners were taken. They were found to be ill fed and filthy. They had executed a remarkable forced march over the desert and no doubt were glad to be in good hands where the necessities of life could be obtained in goodly portions.

The Turks could not again organize their forces to launch a second attack—so thoroughly were they beaten. Though the encounter was not one in which great strategic moves were planned, it was for us, however, the baptism of fire.

It was on this occasion that Kitchener's methods were seen to advantage. What fitter place is there to train men than on sand?

The Australian and New Zealand boys at this time were certainly in fighting trim; in muscular strength and soldierly fitness they were equal, man for man, to any body of men that I have ever seen.

In Egypt the name of Kitchener still commands a respect that is almost awe, from the highest to the lowest; and even the wandering

Arabs on the desert pause at the mention of his name.

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## Ginger Mack

Poor MacLaughlan. He was a man who never did find himself or the groove for which he was fitted in this life. He answered the call from an Australian outback sheep station, away from the temptations of modern civilization. He joined the 6th Battery along with myself and when I first sighted his long lean form it burnt itself in on my brain and is still recorded there. He stood six feet high, was plastered with freckles, and had a head of carrotty-red hair which shamed in coloring the brilliancy of the Egyptian Sunset. His feet were extremely large as also were his hands; it is claimed he could crawl down a rabbit's burrow like a ferret because of his sloping shoulders. He had a touch of quiet humor and a disposition never designed to carry a big load of worry. He was at once the butt of all the camp jokes and the favorite of all his fellows.

He came from over near the Murrumbidgee River and walked most of the distance into the city of Melbourne. He didn't stop to get a



brush-up of any kind, but was awaiting his turn at the Barracks when I arrived to enlist.

Proclaimed physically fit, he was rounded out for Broadmeadows along with a couple of dozen other boys; and after donning the blue "dungarees" and a "slop" fit hat of white cloth, he was a pathetic sight for an artist to gaze upon and a source of merriment to all who had not had a family death within the preceding week.

Ginger's education had been sadly neglected; it was confined to the calculations involved in figuring pay for the shearing of sheep at twenty-five shillings per hundred—and on this Ginger was "all there."

On the first drill day Ginger did not know his right arm from his left, and as for knowing whether he was an even or odd number—why, it was absurd to expect the man to understand a thing like that. This, naturally, made things rather difficult. The drill instructor could never handle him as an "odd" man when "forming fours" because of his absent-mindedness, for when the rest of the squad were formed into "fours" Mack would be dreamily awaiting further orders in the original formation of "two deep." This forced the Instructor to adopt a

plan to keep Mack straight. He was always to have No. 3 position where he would not have to move about in forming fours; it being quite evident that he could count up to three, and three being a low number, he was permanently designated for this position. Ginger one day, becoming quite neglectful because of his familiarity with drill, got into No. 4 position, and on "form fours" being snapped out by our young instructor, Mack was Sphinx-like. "No. 4 take up your correct position" roared the Officer but Mack was dreaming of so many hundred fleeces to the day at so many shillings apiece. The Instructor lost his temper and called out hurriedly "Ginger," then realizing his mistake tried to correct himself by following it up quickly with "Mac." In a minute the undisciplined men were biting their lips in the wild endeavor to control their feelings. Finally Mack clumsily obeyed the Instructor's order, but after that moment he was always "Ginger Mack" to the boys, and after a week's joshing by the boys about his nickname, Mack lazily admitted that "they always calls me by the name of Ginger Mack up 'ome."

Mack always seemed to be the man to be in

trouble of some kind or another. He was the first man to get blistered feet on the parade grounds at Broadmeadows because of ill-fitting army shoes. One day someone had exchanged uniforms with him, another he had none at all to put on in the morning, and when the rest of the men were ready for the day's drills he would be frantically yelling for wearing apparel, with his body out of a tent down to the neck only. He was continually being reprimanded for not shaving—"just because them boys steals me razor." When his complaints had exhausted themselves, I have seen Mack appear on the parade ground with two left shoes on and a box pleat run down the outside of one trouser leg. He would saunter along to the Drill Inspector and softly say, "Sir, it takes me all me time undoing what them boys does for me," and the Instructor would bite his lip and laugh heartily with his intimates at the first opportunity, for he was a good sport and a man through and through.

Ships? Why, Mack never saw one before; and when he found himself on the "A9" and actually leaving the dock on an iron structure he exclaimed with utter amazement in his voice

"Strike me pink, we're off boys;" and, I believe, had the ship slipped into a hole through to the other side of the world, it would have been no greater surprise to the red-headed sheep-shearer.

When the Emden was reported sunk Mack thought one of the jokes was going its rounds till an Officer told him that all was over with the German cruiser. Ginger aired his hair and sauntered along the well deck of the steamer in deep thought.

Ginger was born in a dry barren country and I believe he had always cultivated the habit of drinking like a camel when he had the opportunity. Certainly at Alexandria he laid in a good store and no one else but a Policeman had charge of him on his return to the station where he was readily found, for shipping to Cairo. In this way Ginger did not suffer, it may be, from the tortures of that hot and dusty ride in the cattle-truck, but on arrival at Cairo he was given his reward of merit. A certain amount of cash was always taken along to provide funds for the boys, and in order that this might be safeguarded Ginger was handcuffed to His Majesty's great leather bags and remained on

the job at the dry and deserted camp with a couple of Officers to keep him company.

When the boys returned Ginger got an earfull twice over about the wonderful place Cairo was, and the exquisite qualities of the refreshments to be purchased there "for almost nothing"; and as the Officers observed Ginger shewing obvious symptoms of collapsing under the strain of listening to such tales whilst consuming bad water only, the teasing had to cease, although, of course, the Officers were enjoying the fun fully as much as the men.

We were yet to be made aware of the possibilities of the slouchy Australian, for as soon as he caught sight of Cairo and its marvellous color his one great passion in life revealed itself.

On his first day of leave Ginger hot-footed it into Cairo and purchased a rig-out of artist's materials; (who would have thought of Ginger Mack as an artist!) On his return, without the slightest evidence of having got anything "for almost nothing," Ginger seated himself at a point of vantage with a drawing-board across his knees and with the sure stroke of an untutored genius recorded in line and color the

Sphinx and Pyramids bathed in the glories of Egypt's setting sun. Till he had five studies of Egypt completed, he never said a word except to a few he trusted, and then one day at noon hour Ginger put his work on display. Never again was the name of Ginger Mack coupled with jest, but with respect, admiration—and grief. Some of these works I believe, were treasured by Officers and afterwards returned to Sydney for publication. All now accorded Mack the respect that he deserved; he had come into his own; alas, that his heritage of happiness and honor was to be so brief.

As it chanced Mack made a wager one day that he could climb one of the pyramids, but made the tragic error of misjudging his distance and from about half way up the side of one of these monsters he came rolling down to the bottom. His dead body was picked up and he was numbered among the many unfortunates who have been killed by falling from the Pyramids.



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## Roman Nose

A rough block of a horse with a long mane and trailing tail, who was afterwards called Roman Nose, entered the service of His Majesty with the first call, for his great education in life. He stood about 16 hands, was a bay and had a particularly pronounced curve to his nose (well was he named Roman Nose); and there you have a brief description of a horse who afterwards proved himself to be a brainy animal and in every way superior to the average. He was foaled out in the mountain ranges in the eastern part of Victoria, so they said; but I maintain that he was a "brumby" rung in on the Government in exchange for a handsome price. His breaking-in was commenced in the orthodox manner, but it was early seen that his obstinacy could not be mastered by any of the boys in No. 4 Battery so afterwards he was transferred to another Battery and then still another, in the hope that some one would be willing to take the "brumby" under his care and teach him manners. But the quest was in vain; and finally Roman Nose

was turned over as a "present" to the 6th Battery "as it was a pity to leave such a fine up-standing animal behind"—in the words of the Officers. I volunteered to care for the horse.

On arrival in camp his coat had never known the touch of a brush, and his eyes rolled madly in their sockets when any person laid hand on him. It may well be he had never during his five years of roaming life, seen a white man before the great round-up of horse flesh for Kitchener's army.

He reluctantly submitted to be transformed from the horse natural to one without a mane and with only a bobbed tail; but it was useless for man or horse to try a slacker's game in the army in those days.

It was now my endeavor to break him to harness, and many buck-jumping battles were fought out between us for the amusement of the boys; and let credit be given where credit is due—Roman Nose would not stop short of victory. My daily preoccupation was to see whose skill was greater, but the "brumby" from the mountains never would surrender. To him civilization with its trappings, its straps—particularly its tight belly band, were naught but

a nuisance, and after each fight, bridle, saddle and trainer lay strewn about the ground in an order becoming to the majesty of this great horse. Sometimes I would remain mounted just until Roman Nose decided to roll or leap into the air and fall backwards, but the worse he behaved the better was my treatment of this wildest horse an army ever mustered. As no progress seemed to be made in mastering the animal, it was finally decided to leave him behind. When I heard that I pleaded earnestly on behalf of my dumb "friend". I argued that the sea voyage ahead would tend to quiet him, and this coupled with the handling, incidental to confinement on an ocean liner, would surely result in the animal being mastered. So I prevailed, and we took him along. Frantically he objected to the loading at Melbourne, but with the aid of a horse-slip and the steamer's winch, Roman Nose was in his allotted few square feet down in the bowels of the ship where little light found its way.

Immediately after loading I located my charger and I was amused as he showed the whites of his rolling eyes when he viewed his new surroundings after having his wish broken

for the first time; and from this moment he had graduated into another class for the remainder of his education, for he had been forced against his will to submit to the treatment of men. This change from the vast expanse of mountain ranges to an unhealthy dark horse-box tried the horse's heart greatly, but with a little extra food I reckoned on his being in fair shape at the end of the voyage—and at all times he shewed his appreciation of my actions by endeavoring to paw or kick me to death.

Many horses suffered so badly on the voyage that they had to be shot and thrown overboard, but such was not the fate allotted to Roman Nose.

The Artillery Drivers had all the care of the horses, but Roman Nose fared better than the rest, and even though I plead guilty to having been a thief, I believe the offense was worthily committed. Roman Nose's share of food during the voyage was far above the average, but despite the care meted out to him, the confinement and the absence of the good sunlight was telling. Gradually he began to be subdued in spirit some-

what by the actualities of this horrible existence he was leading well under the water line.

Fortunately, the seven weeks on the water were over before this noble steed became too far gone, or I believe he would have yielded to the great master Death.

As the horse became weaker and his legs swelled more and more, he would not object too frantically to the bathing of them, provided one could throw a bucket of water straight for three or four yards. Other horses' legs were massaged, but no human hand could ever approach the region of Roman Nose's legs with safety.

A tall, lean horse walked uneasily from the ship at Alexandria, reminding one of a consumptive arriving at a sanitarium. His coat was shaggy, his legs were swollen, and his former dash was gone; but yet he was at all times set to question any person's authority over him.

He was now in Egypt—a land of noble lines in art and architecture—and was about to again progress in his studies. How he enjoyed the sunlight and the warmth of it after those seven dark weeks! He would paw the ground and indulge in horse-play of the roughest character,

but fortunately the other horses were by this time quiet and settled down to the monotony of their life, for had they all been of Roman Nose's character a stampede would immediately have resulted.

When we loaded him into the freight car for shipment to Cairo it was much like the Melbourne experience, but a little persuasion soon resulted in the much tired Roman Nose being safely landed in the midst of the other horses bound for some place across the sun kissed desert.

I do not know how he fared during the journey—a journey which to us proved to be interesting and restful, but on our reunion at Cairo I imagined he was quite appreciative of seeing me again. He shewed signs indeed, of becoming domesticated for he only raised one hind leg with the playful purpose of dashing out my brains. His usual procedure had been to leap into the air with two or three grunts and snorts and literally throw his legs in the direction of any admirers.

When the horses had been unloaded at Cairo, it fell to my lot to lead Roman Nose with five other animals to Mena Camp. This called for



a watchful eye as it required only a little Egyptian color or the presence of a smelly camel far on the windward side to create a stampede amongst the six haltered horses. People acquire unreasonable notions, I know, but I cannot help having a strong conviction that Roman Nose was not alarmed by the odor from the camels but simply took exception because of their gruesome build. It was on one of these occasions that a mix-up of six horses and myself resulted in one of the horses getting loose and subsequently finding his way right into a butcher's store in the near-by city.

As time progressed the expiration of the official month's period for the breaking of the horses was nearing, after which time the horses were to be ridden and finally trained to their work at all costs. Owing to the collapse of the transport system, the fodder for the horses became very scarce indeed, and this of course taxed the weaker horses till at length leather guards were placed about their mouths in order that they might not appease their appetites with the sands of the desert. Roman Nose never had much reason to curse the presence of this muzzle, for, when the situation grew serious,

I was usually able to meet the exigency, and I was quite prepared to do anything in order to keep my favorite in fair condition.

I seemed to be always on picket duty. This involved my walking up and down the whinnying lines of horses whose heads were always turned towards the picket in the hope that food was coming and to be certain not to lose their share. I often thought of myself as a Russian General being looked at by his troops when on inspection, but my pulse was quite normal till a certain curved and prominent profile came into view which told me that Roman Nose was still standing up against the strain of life on the desert.

Indeed, horses were daily collapsing, and it was because of my fear that Roman Nose would cross over the great divide that I forthwith decided to improve matters at any expense. A dead horse would often leave a little food behind him and so in the future I became a student of the symptoms usually associated with dying horses in order that I might be able to collect a little extra food for my favorite. This method of gleaning relieved the strain somewhat, but as death is always a matter of un-

certainty it was quite apparent that other tactics would have to be adopted in order to bring in a regular supply of food. Consequently I decided to steal a hatful of poorly chopped fodder on every round that I made past the food depot by gaining entrance to the shed by means of a little window handily placed. Those wide rimmed Australian hats we used for everything from a wash basin to protection from the rays of the sun. I have seen them used for carrying water, and on one occasion I witnessed a hungry private stealing stew in one. So a hatful at a time, I supplied my horse with extra rations. Under this treatment Roman Nose immediately shewed signs of returning to his former self, and gradually but surely his oldtime dash was beginning to assert itself.

The order was now given that all horses had to be broken to the saddle and the great work of mastering Roman Nose was on.

The horse was beaten prior to saddling but he didn't know it. He resisted to his utmost when being saddled by four Artillerymen. The hopes of the boys had dwindled when Roman Nose had sidled out of the slip at Alexandria gaunt and weak and spiritless, but now he

was in fair condition, and a buck-jumping contest was at hand to the great delight of the boys who formed a circle about us. With a saddle well secured around him and a heavy bridle about his head, I was thrown on to his quivering back, and if ever man and horse flesh were opposed to each other in battle it was on this occasion. The horse was foaming at the mouth with rage—his eyes glared in the bright sunlight and he commenced by bucking himself into a ball and spinning around with the speed of a whirlwind. High into the air he threw the sand as he alternately plunged and braced; but his efforts were in vain. The sand was too much of a handicap. The horse's eye lit up with bloody despair, and as he played his trump tricks he was gradually forced to admit the possibility of there being a joker in the pack. Twice did he commence to lie down on my leg and once he threatened to crush me by rearing high into the air and falling back on me in order to gain his much prized freedom and immunity from discipline. The fight continued uninterruptedly and was urged on and on by the screaming and whistling of the boys, and then as if by the working of magic—he resolved to

behave, and from that time he never again bucked with me. With other Australians indeed, he was just the same wild "brumby" as ever, but with me he was willing and docile and ready to learn and to obey.

Shortly after this I had Roman Nose performing on his hind legs and he was unanimously accepted as the mascot of the regiment. He was always being groomed by someone or nibbling a lump of sugar after having shaken hands a dozen times or more with both forelegs, but his great mission in life was not fulfilled till about six months later.

## Anzacs

The children unborn shall acclaim  
The standard the Anzacs unfurled  
When they made Australasia's fame  
The wonder and pride of the world.

Some of you got a V. C.,  
Some "the Gallipoli trot,"  
Some had a grave by the sea,  
And all of you got it damned hot,  
And I see you go limping through town  
In the faded old hospital blue,  
And driving abroad—lying down,  
And Lord! but I wish I were you!

I envy you beggars I meet,  
From the dirty old hats on your head  
To the rusty old boots on your feet—  
I envy you living or dead.  
A knighthood is fine in its way,  
A peerage gives splendour and fame,  
But I'd rather have tacked any day  
That word to the end of my name.

I'd count it the grandest reward  
That ever a man could attain;  
I'd sooner be "Anzac" than "lord,"  
I'd rather be "Anzac" than "thane."  
Here's a bar to the medal you'll wear,  
There's a word that will glitter and glow,  
And an honor a king cannot share  
When you're back in the cities you know.

Repeat.  
The Children (etc.).

(This tribute to the Anzacs is included at the express wish of the Editors.)



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## From Egypt to Gallipoli

Upon our return to Mena Camp from Suez we found a few changes in Officers and tents, but the most noticeable of all was an advancement in the hours of drill and a greatly intensified drilling system.

Grumbling was common, but there were very few men who could not stand the extra physical strain as all the boys were in excellent condition.

Route-marching for an "unmeasured" 15 miles under the command of an Officer unburdened by a pack on his shoulders, was a trial of strength not soon forgotten—an experience permanently linked up with memories of the hot, dusty, trackless desert. We even attempted the impossible, viz, digging trenches in the sands—excellent play for little tots with diminutive shovels at the sea-shore, but on the dry loose sands of the desert a task to be imposed on the Devil himself for his crimes. One could indeed manage to scratch a line somewhere only to have the wind catch up the sand and obliterate all immediately. When practicing in these trenches it would not be long before the

boys were almost buried in the sand, and except for a row of shoulders and heads one would have thought the sand had swallowed up the entire body of men except the Officers.

Before departing from this land of disease and sickness a service of purification was performed by the soldiers themselves by burning up certain disreputable houses which had been responsible for much that was regrettable in the first battalion. The event to which I refer was the burning of the Wasir which horrified the British Officers, but which the Australians present regarded with great and just satisfaction as they gazed on the curling fire and smoke ascending to the heavens.

Shortly after this event orders were issued by our Major to the effect that we were to prepare to leave Egypt immediately and proceed to Gallipoli to attack the Turk in his home country. This operation was, for a time, jestingly dubbed by us "The Walk-over to Constantinople," but, alas, destiny had it indelibly written in another way.

My first thought on receiving this information was for my favorite horse Roman Nose, as the horses were to be left behind. I stole

him a little extra food as a parting gift, shook hands with him for the last time, and when I finally fell into formation for the march to Cairo, it seemed as though a member of my family were missing. With other regiments we numbered in all about thirty thousand men drawn from the Australians and New Zealanders then in training on the desert.

Once again we were on that railroad between Cairo and Alexandria; it seemed as though I was about to become a commuter. On arrival at the seaport we were hurriedly marched to the transports lying in readiness to take us to our destination.

Shortly after leaving port we were advised to make out our wills, to write home and leave all things straight, as war was ahead of us. Instead of the boys becoming low-spirited we were merrier than ever; to us the affair was more than ever nothing but "The Great Adventure."

At the Island of Lemnos we disembarked and shipped away again within a couple of hours in British Men-o'-war to the Peninsular, which point we made at midnight. To land troops on an unknown coast at the dead of night with

no lights to guide them was impossible, so the landing was set for five in the morning. Little did we dream what lay before us.

At the appointed hour everything was in readiness; soldiers were in battle order, every man carrying a week's supply of rations, 250 rounds of ammunition, wire cutters and other necessary equipment. These wire cutters came in very handy later, as we shall see.

As the British Men-o'-war moved in towards the coast the fire from the Turkish batteries commenced; the British battleships returned the fire whenever a battery was located and once this was accomplished a few shots put the same out of commission permanently. Shells were flying in all directions, bursting, splashing and screaming over our heads, making in all a damnable noise as our own guns returned the fire. To a casual eye it certainly would appear that a landing was impossible, but those boys nobly accomplished the impossible.

Our Officers now ordered us to enter the small boats, which were being lowered over the side of the ships (there were hundreds of them rowed by bluejackets); and as each boat was loaded with its full complement of about 18



Anzac Cove—Scene of the Historic Landing.



An Example of Intense Turkish Fire During Landing Operations





men, it would start off in the direction of the Turkish shore a couple of hundred yards distant. As the land was neared the hotter grew the fire from the Turks batteries and machine guns high up on the cliffs that rose practically from the water's edge. What chance in the face of such odds had we of making good? But the orders were to be obeyed by disciplined men at the cost even of life itself, and on and on came the little boats with their loads of human freight making an excellent target for the enemy's machine gunners. Boats were struck by shells and capsized, men were falling dead in their boats stricken by the Turkish rifle fire, whilst other boats losing both oars and oarsmen were floating helplessly about. It was a sorry spectacle, but it steeled the hearts of those whom fate still spared, and on and on came those little boats, defying death in the manner of the Australian.

It was now my turn to go over in a small boat. Hand over hand we dropped into the boat and shoved off from the battleship. "Spit-spit-spit-spit" and at my side a comrade hung his head as if bent in prayer. He was sleeping for the last time and before he had even sighted

anything but smoke from the Turkish batteries located away up on the hill. We could not stop to attend to him, but on we went, whilst around us fell the hail from the machine guns.

Our boat now slowed in its course; we had lost an oarsman, and the water was pouring through the punctures made by the rifle fire. Slim indeed were our chances, but yet, out there ahead of us some of our comrades were actually stepping from their boats on to Turkish soil. As fast as they left their boats it was hand to hand fighting to maintain their foothold, and at times it looked as if the entire Australian contingent were doomed to death. But what military theory or strength of numbers can conquer the might of spirited men who know that right is on their side?

The shells were flying now in all directions, but still we were making progress; a landing had actually been made by a few boat-loads, and God; how those boys fought the unspeakable Turks in hand-to-hand battles. Australia is noted for her two-fisted fighters, but where did the like of these battles ever occur.

The boat I am in is now nearing the land. I leap overboard and meet an obstruction. My

feet are pinned to the bottom; they are tangled in barbed wire strung beneath the water, I stand helpless and despairing when, suddenly I remember my wire cutters and in a moment I am free and quite ready to stick those dark skinned chaps at the first possible opportunity. I look around and find quite a number of boats have made the landing. There we are, in a small band, but this is no time for taking account of numbers, and off we go in the direction of one of their trenches in high spirits to give them a taste of our steel. Rifles meet and rifles speak, and steel clashes on steel; the fight is bloody and the Turks fall before us. Still I am breathing and with a whole skin except for a few small scratches made by the barbed wire. I run to the aid of a tight-cornered pal and bowl over a couple of Turks, not, however, before my pal is brought to his knees. On and on goes the hand-to-hand fighting. The Turks are not so well drilled with the bayonet as we, and we meet them in a goodly style. We round them up from the immediate shore and push them back one by one; we gradually work them up the hill and clean them up as we go along so as to make the landing safer for our comrades.

At times it looked as if the boys were all going under, but the small boats keep coming to the aid of those already ashore, and we still fight on determinedly. The undertaking has been commenced and it is to be finished at any cost. Finally a few hundred have effected a landing at terrific cost. The Turks retire into their strong trenches and wait for us to root them out while their snipers on the cliffs pick off our men from every direction. Now the empty boats are returning for their second and third loads of men. What a thrill it gives one to really feel oneself at last a soldier—confident and determined under any circumstances. The man comes into full possession of his body, the mean qualities disappear and he feels as though he is a giant with a just cause and a just God viewing his actions from on high.

Now we avail ourselves of any shelter that offers till more of the boys can join us to make a charge against the Turkish trenches.

The sun is gradually going down, and we are not sorry for the promise of rest that night brings with it. Men lie about in all positions—the wounded, the dying, the dead—there being no Red Cross stretcher bearers to carry them

away, and again our hearts are steeled for the fight on the morrow.

At dawn we were Officered after a fashion, and ready to give these infidels Hell on earth. During the night certain of the more venturesome Turks had crawled out and mutilated some of the wounded and the dead by cutting off the heads, disemboweling their victims, and so arranging the corpses that their faces were looking out of their stomachs; and usually the body was conspicuously placed in a sitting posture facing our line. We never dreamed such horrors would be; from now on it was war to the death.

During the night we removed most of the barbed wire entanglements from the immediate vicinity of the shore so as to enable the man-drawn guns to be landed on the morrow, and at daybreak men stripped to the waist were drawing our guns ashore. Sixty men usually constituted the man power for conducting this operation whilst shot and shell screamed and sang overhead and all around.

Here General Bridges, Commander-in-Chief of the Australians lost his life whilst conducting operations from his battleship.

On and on the battle raged throughout the long hours of that day. From our batteries we were now able to return the fire of the Turks with some effect and ever more the big guns of the battleships played havoc with the land batteries, which went up in smoke as fast as they were located. Well might the Turks quiver under their little red caps! Machine gun fire was now continuous, and the atmosphere was rent with its chattering till one forgot what really caused the noise, only to find its deadly arms clutching at a nearby comrade. Casualties were still climbing, but with cool heads and clean bodies we had hope; many were confident of advancing and cleaning up the nests of machine guns and snipers.

The sun went down; our eyelids were heavy with sleep. It was then, at the weary end of the second day, that a sneaking Turkish sniper slew my brother. Near by he lay—dead. Only a couple of days ago we were together—happy. There must be some mistake about it! It seemed incredible. Throughout the long and dreary night the fire from the Turkish machine guns and batteries never ceased. Sleep was impossible—would have been still impossible had we



lain on feather beds instead of blankets thrown over the rocks; and, on the next morning our men were weary and worn of body but undaunted of spirit and stout of heart to meet the Turk.

Shortly before 8 o'clock on this morning I buried my young brother—buried him as best I could—without shroud or ceremony, sacrament or prayer—save the silent prayers of my own heart, aching with the loss of the 19 year old lad who had paid the supreme sacrifice in so noble a manner.

We were now preparing to further our gains when—"ping:" and my right leg felt a little itchy. We were forming for battle when I found myself becoming faint, and on examining my leg I found a very severe bleeding was taking place. Not having any way of attending my wound I gradually became weaker and weaker from loss of sleep and blood. The wound was a ragged one made apparently by a piece of shrapnel. Whatever it was, the piece of steel did not stay with me but continued on its errand.

I must soon have become unconscious and remained so for some time, for the next thing

I remember was the sight of a deckhead on board ship. An attendant informed me that I was due for hospital; and when I asked permission to take a little exercise, I was politely but frankly informed that I might be able to get on my legs in five or six weeks—not before—as I had developed enteric fever. The thought that I should not be able to avenge my dead brother dawned upon me and I felt as though I had not done my duty; so I resolved to return to the “bounders” when again fit and well. And with this mental resolution I resigned myself, for the time being, to my fate.

I was sent to Egypt for treatment and eventually shipped off to Melbourne, Australia, along with other bad cases who were considered unfit for further active service.

After passing seven weary weeks on my back under doctors’ care, I found myself in a convalescent hospital just outside of Melbourne, which place I left only to be discharged from the army as unfit for further military service. I was, I must confess, thin and haggard-looking but as to the big fight—that was to me just a question of time, and I would surely find my



6th Battery, 2nd Field Artillery Brigade, in Action—Pvt. Howard's Battery. Center Figure is Gunner Pitts, ex-Police Officer of Sydney and a friend of Pvt. Howard.



way back across the Indian Ocean through the canal and up to Gallipoli.

I spent a couple of months among my relatives in Victoria, Australia, hoping to pick up my former vim and pep, but the fever had taken too much out of me according to the military doctors who again refused my services in any military capacity, and I hung my head and walked slowly from their presence.

Before I go further, let me say a word about the origin of "ANZAC" for there seems to be some confusion on this point.

When the first contingent of picked men sailed from Egypt for Gallipoli, its commander, Gen. Bridges, was asked to give a code word by which it might be designated in telegraph dispatches. The name of this body of about 30,000 men was "Australia - New Zealand Army Corps," and the code word given by Gen. Bridges was made up of the initial letters in this name; thus, "A-N-Z-A-C." Such is the origin of the name commonly given to all Australian Soldiers but properly applied only to these particular troops.

## Our Task

We march along the roads of France  
Aligned with trees—in war's advance—  
While in the fields, the poppies red  
Proclaim abroad the blood we shed.

We whistle songs of "Home Sweet Home"  
Resolved we nevermore shall roam  
But in the wheat, the cornflowers blue  
Nodded to us, "Be true, be true."

The bombs come down, the shells explode  
The bullets whistle o'er the road.  
Though filled with fear, the daisy white  
Whispers to us, "Our cause is Right."

Tho' men may bleed and men may die  
With gun and bayonet we try  
To win the war to which we're led  
Encouraged e'en by poppy red.

So ever on, with ideals high  
We press our cause e'n though we die  
And though we sleep in graves made new  
O'er us may blow the cornflower blue.

When smoke of battle clears away  
And peace o'er all the world holds sway  
Whenever God will send the light  
"Our cause was just" shouts daisy white.

*Andrew D. Robb, Captain.*

The above was written in a dug-out in Picardy and presented to Private Howard. This is the first publication of these lines.



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## Revenge

It was, I confess, revenge pure and simple that prompted me again to entertain the idea of fighting—anyone of the German-ruled countries would appease my appetite for avenging the loss of my young brother. The Australian Government had refused me; the only possible way I could see of overcoming the difficulty was to journey to the States and make a fresh start.

I was sauntering lazily around the piers looking over the various transport boats, and as I had previously been in America I was attracted by the sight of the Stars and Stripes hanging over the stern of a five-masted schooner in graceful lines. I thought that here might be a possibility of getting away to the United States, so I interviewed a red-headed ruffian, who, upon throwing out his chest and thrusting his thumbs in the arm holes of his vest, said in a deep bass voice that he was the Skipper of the schooner. In reply to my request for a job he said "Bring your clothes on board right away." That afternoon I signed on as an able-bodied seaman before the mast, although I knew very little about

sea life with its hundred and one duties peculiar to life on a schooner. The next morning we sailed away down the bay and headed for America on a 70 day trip—as the Captain reckoned; but alas, 104 days had passed before our trim schooner, “Mini,” sighted the Pacific Coast line.

All went well on this trip till we passed through the Straits between the North and South Islands of New Zealand, when up came a hurricane and we were tossed at the mercy of the wind and wave till Cape Pigeons was sighted. That meant that we were hundreds of miles out of our course.

I have ridden wild horses more than once, but the Mini had everything wild and vicious beaten out of sight for bucking and tossing, stalling and jumping and side-stepping and every other kind of untamed motion. With the sails reefed down to nothing and the gale howling through the ropes and rattlings she would actually “shoot the chutes.” If we had put sail out, and had her masts been sufficiently strong to withstand the strain. I believe she would have been transformed into a flying ship. She was more often under water than

not, and if she did not have the port or starboard deck awash, for weeks on end, it was a fact worth recording in the log book. Naturally, as we were 34 days overdue, our food supply after a while began failing. Now, instead of languishing in a hospital I was beginning to get thin at sea—my face felt lean to the touch under my neglected heavy black beard. After passing over the line with comparative ease we were becalmed. Fortunately fish were plentiful and there was a goodly supply of tackle on board. Had it not been for these fish,—well, it's fisherman's luck to catch plenty when he really starts in—in earnest, and we did not starve. Every time passing showers came our way we would catch as much water as possible and with a strict rule that no more than a pint of water per man per day was to be used, we managed till we arrived at Aberdeen in the State of Washington. This trip was sufficient to convince me that sea-faring existence is not intended for a man raised out in the great outdoors of Australia. I had no intention of ever making the return trip if only I should set foot again safely on U. S. territory; and on collecting my pay, I waved a fond farewell to the little

schooner of the graceful lines, and to a sea voyage that had taken years off my life.

### **My "Health Resort"**

The last 104 days had undoubtedly improved my nerves but in other ways it had robbed me of some of my vim, and not being up to the Canadian Army standard I decided to have a little taste of life out in the logging camps where the sunbeams play in the tall timbers along in the slopes of the Western coast.

I was an Australian still, and naturally "held dead" the methods of bush life of my homeland. The first morning I commenced work considerable amusement was caused because of my short grip of the axe, and to this was added another disadvantage because in Australia a single blade is used whereas out in this camp double blade axes were universal. I was dubbed a "new chum" at this business, but after a couple of hours of work it was seen that I was getting away with the job in a creditable manner, and after that I was never embarrassed by looking up and finding a husky gazing amusedly at me and my methods.

The only recreation these great big-hearted, fine fellows had was cards, and money being rather scarce, the coin was "socks." It seemed strange to be always gambling for an article of general use, and I have seen some men with 50 and 60 pairs of expensive woolen socks. These garments cost about 70c per pair, and if one man chose to leave the place he cashed in his checks (socks) to a Secretary and the value of them was added to his pay roll when he was heading for the big city. It was on record that the Superintendent of this logging camp first instituted the idea of gambling for socks, but from whatever source it came, it was a brilliant idea and prevented the men from becoming penniless as only a limited number of pairs were in circulation. Every logger in that camp had good socks besides having other clothing which cost originally as much as a gentleman's purchased at some of the leading stores on Fifth Avenue, New York.

I was rapidly improving in health in the great outdoors; so when I judged myself to be physically fit I decided to have a little holiday along the Pacific Coast where I chanced

to meet some Australians, and after seeing the sights of Sunny California, I returned to Seattle, Washington, and crossed the border to Canada. On presenting myself as a Gallipoli survivor, I was given the glad hand, and in a few minutes I was proclaimed physically fit and clothed in a khaki uniform.

### **From Coast to Coast**

Now I was in the 11th Canadian Mounted Rifles—once again with the good horses, and being sufficiently well trained in the arts of warfare, I was sent away on the long overland journey to Halifax, Nova Scotia, two days after my arrival in Vancouver.

In order to arouse the patriotism of the Canadians still enjoying civil life we were paraded up the main streets headed by a couple of bands at the principal cities through which we passed. Flags flew everywhere and at each town or city the boys were laden down with hampers and baskets containing all the home delicacies from sandwiches to maple syrup. If the "slacker" of the Empire or of this country could march in a few of those Canadian scenes, his heart would



soon cast out the idea that this war was not for him. My pen fails to do justice to the kindness extended to us along the whole of our thirteen-day journey to Halifax.

At the town of Golden, away up in the Canadian Rockies, a snow slide occurred and it was because of this that such an unusual time was taken in crossing from coast to coast.

Halifax was reached at last, but owing to the delay en route we missed our transport and so had to wait one week in the Nova Scotian city, where, I might here record, I was known a little because I had previously roamed to this corner of the world. I renewed old acquaintances and when our week's spell had expired orders came that we were to be loaded at five in the morning on a transport lying at a nearby pier.

How the scenes of my first experience aboard the Australian transport came back to me when we drew away from the pier and into a veil of mist just rising from the harbor; how well I knew the conditions under which we would sleep and eat and go through setting up exercises on a few square feet of deck space when the conditions were suitable. On this trip, however,

the sea-gods were good to us, for most of the time the deck was drenched with spray from a head-sea, which, of course, none of us resented.

Many concerts were given to pass away the hours on this crowded ship, and it did not matter at what hour, for there was always an audience—even for the amateurs game enough to try their skill with an operatic air or an impersonation of Caruso with a severe cold. But they were not all amateurs. Among the men on board were representatives of all the arts and crafts; and it seemed strange to find gifted musicians rubbing elbows with us as privates, and other men talented in various spheres, hidden in a private's uniform.

Owing to the submarine menace all men were ordered to don their life buoys when on deck, and it was a strange sight to see everyone so prepared for disaster. The life-belts were not of the common circular type or there would not have been sufficient room on the ship to carry the soldiers, but were made of flat pieces of cork covered with canvas which fitted around the body.

On the eighth day out a speck on the horizon told the men that land was at hand, and it later

proved to be a bit of the smoky city of Liverpool. All eyes were eagerly turned towards the little speck of England, when right off our starboard bow, up popped a submarine, and in another minute there were two of the "tin fish" moving about, and my heart beat a tattoo against my ribs. The Captain's face, however, shewed no signs of alarm, the mates moved about as usual and in a moment the "subs" disappeared from view to the great satisfaction of all concerned.

Liverpool is a city where the smoke never rises—at least, so it seems, and the first peep of England was disappointing, as I think is almost any land viewed from along the water front.

Our ship was swung into a wharf and no sooner had we arrived than the men commenced to file off with their full equipment. The horses were unloaded and presently everything was in readiness for departure and we entrained with many speculations as to our unknown destination.

The scenery was now that of rural England with its delightful country lanes and quaint cottages and flower gardens. Rumors were afloat—rumors that came from the major through

a sick man who heard him talking to a sergeant who told the cook confidentially of our movements—that we were going to Kent, and for once rumor was correct.

We were now surely in Kent—the land of the hop fields—and at last we were ordered to leave the train.

### **The English Training**

The Zeps now came before my eyes for the first time in their deadly work of dropping bombs over London and the surrounding suburbs. I had not dreamed of the seriousness of the Zep raids whilst in Australia, the United States or Canada, but now it was right with me, and I could no longer think of it as occurring thousands of miles away. I had actually been in the war and seen service on two fronts but never before had I realized the meaning of the word "Zep." Newspaper reports were anxiously awaited, giving particulars of the latest raid and the deaths resulting therefrom; these always seemed to include some poor helpless women and little children. So frequent were these raids that one could not help being

concerned about them, despite the fact that thousands were dying weekly on the western battlefields across the Channel in France. On the first occasion when I got leave from this camp down in Kent, I decided to go to London and view some of the work of these cowardly machines which crawl overhead in the still hours on moonless nights.

I arrived in London on a Monday morning, and that night, when all was dark, sure enough the Zep warning was sounded. Then followed terrific explosions apparently close at hand. Windows were smashed in by the concussion and houses rocked on their foundations. Explosions followed at regular intervals; each one a little farther away than the previous one.

The next morning I arose early, having in mind to view the destruction wrought by these infernal machines, and after inquiring as to the direction of the ruins I had no difficulty in soon locating them. For hundreds of yards around, the windows were smashed in and the sidewalks littered with broken glass, so I judged that I was quite close to the scene of the explosion. I had just turned around the next block when my eyes met a sorrowful sight—women and

children huddled together in the street watching their homes going up in fire. It was too pathetic for a Canadian pal and myself so we did not remain long in that section of the city where fire was destroying the homes of the poor, and it was uncertain whether missing husbands and fathers had been burned to death in the catastrophe.

All over London there seemed to be thousands of men from all parts of the world crippled for life, but what was worst of all were the cases of liquid fire victims and gas cases. The loss of a limb meant fair fighting, so it seemed, but those poor fellows who suffered the tortures of Hell itself when sprayed with liquid fire made pity and hatred flame within me at once, and I resolved to add their cause to that of my dead brother when I got a chance at the Hun on the battlefields across the Channel.

For the first time there stirred in my heart the consciousness of an unconquerable purpose spurring me on to the greatest efforts, and I returned to the training fields "way down in Kent" with my blood at the boiling point—permanently; and if these men could teach me anything in modern war tactics which would help



to stop the Hun, I resolved, I was the man to learn it—to master it and put it into execution. I did not want any further leave to see the sights; it was not a time to seek pleasure or visit interesting points in the old city of London; I only craved and waited for an opportunity which could best be brought about by my own hard work.

New drills and instruction in the very latest war tactics were daily developing, and it was here that I learned the many tricks in bayoneting that afterwards proved so useful. Throwing bombs, machine gun practice and intensive training occupied much of our time at Kent, and I never tired of the instructions demonstrating the use of the butt of the rifle to “chin” an opponent, nor of practicing the stabbing of imaginary Huns to the accompaniment of an Officer’s yelling, “In, out, on guard.” To stick a Hun with a bayonet does not necessarily call for a severe thrust—three or four inches of steel usually proves sufficient to do the “good work.” In the first actual fighting the novice usually thrusts his bayonet right through his opponent, which means that the bayonet becomes fastened, and this leaves him without a weapon to at-

tack another enemy at hand or to defend himself from attack. Well did our instructors teach this bayonet play, and before very long I became quite accomplished with the bayonet. Bayonet work is a combination of Japanese wrestling, sword duelling and boxing. One must have quick and light feet together with the nimbleness and sharp eyes of the eagle—and then “Kamerad” is heard on all sides when once over in the German trenches.

By this time I had undergone a very lengthy and complete period of training, was “as fit as a fiddle,” and having graduated from the novice class of bayonet men—men whose slowness was due to their not having yet seen a Zep raid on London, I thought—I was picked out along with two hundred other Canadians as efficiently trained in the modern war methods, and although not knowing exactly our destination, our hearts were filled with glee because something was going to happen to take us away from the training grounds in Kent and possibly across to France immediately.

Our Fate was not as we would have moulded it, however, for we received a further final polish in Kent, in the science and practice of bomb-

ing parties, scouting duties and the latest methods of "going over the top;" and now we were full of information from head to foot and, believe me, there is something for Mr. Rookie to learn before he ever gets an opportunity to try out his gas mask "Over There."

### Off for the Front

Orders, orders, orders—I hear them yet in my sleep and awake from my dreams with the thought of them. This time it was "Fall in the 200 picked men and prepare for your departure." France at last; the dreamed-of possibilities of mastering the Hun, in reality was at hand.

The anticipations of one "over there" are usually reversed. When we packed our kits and went the rounds farewelling Canadian pals we expected to step right into a communication trench and crawl under the barbed wire entanglements, but anticipation far outranges realization.

After much excitement we were ready to depart and as the order "Forward, march," was shouted the regimental band struck up, "The

Girl I Left Behind Me," and we stepped out with added vim and pep—anxious to become real soldiers.

We all marched to the station in high spirits and took the train to Southampton where most of our last three-penny or six-penny coins were spent purchasing "alf-and-'alf." The whole city seemed to be backing us up in spirit and a small army of mothers and sisters and small brothers were present to give an affectionate send-off to the departing boys. Through a quarter of a mile of warehouses adjoining the dock, and single file during the latter stage of our march we came to a kind of cage into which the men were marched. It certainly was a cage and from it none guilty could escape. It was here that a final examination was conducted, sufficiently strict, you may be sure, to trap the wisest spy or combination of spies. There was not a possibility of going through this man cage unless one furnished a correct history of oneself. A few of the 200 boys in question were not up to the mark with their replies and so were left behind.

We were again pushing away from the dock when on looking around we ascertained the fact

that other picked men from various camps in England were with us.

The trip across the channel, always a delightful experience for the many holidayers in pre-war days, was most uneventful. France was now our destination for sure, although members of our party would bet to the contrary on the theory that the War Office always reverses things. This time, however, the cynics lost out, for we pulled into Boulogne, and for the first time in the lives of many of us our eyes gazed upon French soil. An awful stillness, a certain deadness, seemed to be hovering over the whole place, and I wanted to know where were the hysterical French that one is so accustomed to reading about. Why, they were stoics! They seemed unmoved by our arrival—perhaps they were too stubborn to admit of happiness and too much in earnest to waste time in welcoming us to their strange land. So we went into camp again in a town in France.

This camp life was pretty monotonous, and I had really begun to sicken of it in England, but on coming across the Channel and hearing the booming of big guns I was temporarily

cheered. This camp, however, was about the last straw to me.

It was here that the Ross Rifle of Canada was taken from us and replaced with the Lee-Enfield, which is considerably lighter and better fitted for trench warfare. Our beautiful leather was replaced with web equipment, and gas masks were given out to us. These gas masks were of the latest type. Steel helmets were also handed out and at last we felt ready in all respects for the trenches, but not too sure, for one could not be certain of what that War Office in London was likely to do. Now we were actually placed in the trenches—trenches miles and miles behind the firing lines for practicing under so called realistic conditions. This brought into play the use of gas, tear shells, bomb-throwing and many other details of actual trench life. We would charge over No Man's Land quite fearless of the enemy and bayonet the dummy Germans on the other side a thousand times a day.



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## The Battle of the Somme

The Somme—the bloodiest of all battles that the world has known up to this time was the earthquake that rocked the German Empire and demonstrated to the world the irresistible power of the men of the British Empire. Little is known by the great newspaper-reading public of the battlefield bathed in blood around the Somme fronts, as it is customary for the Home Office in London to remain quiet, but to convince readers of the indomitable courage of the men on the Somme I cannot do better than recommend the reading of a captured document compiled by a great German Strategist in the person of General Von Armin wherein he records his views during the first month of the Great Somme battle. In this historical statement the General paints a melancholy scene amounting in all to chaos—item by item of their great cumbersome war machine was weighed in the balance and found wanting as their impregnable positions one by one were sacrificed. General Von Armin only deals with the operations of the first month and it does not re-

quire pages of explanation to describe the conditions existing during the remaining seven months as the Somme line was undergoing extreme pressure during this period. This battle was one of the turning points in this Great War and the immensity of the operations is beyond description.

For many months the strategists of the Allies were preparing for this monstrous blow which disturbed the German morale and tarnished their discipline.

The strategical objectives of the Somme offensive were many but the chief ones can be stated in a few brief sentences.

To relieve the extreme pressure upon the French at Verdun was absolutely essential, and because of the Somme victories hundreds of thousands of German troops were taken from the Verdun front and hurriedly despatched to the Somme in order to curb our advances.

To demonstrate the great and growing powers of the British armies at this time was deemed essential, and the impregnable positions of the Germans which were reinforced by Nature fell one after the other to the great amazement of the German Staff, and in this way the higher

ground was gained and securely held.

Outside of these two great factors the weakening of the German morale deserves mention as from this time on the slave-soldier of Germany began to realize that his cause was lost irretrievably.

The perfecting of barrage-fire was also carried out on the Somme front, and from the 1st of July, 1916, onward, the Germans have ceased boasting of their genius of organization and they are astounded by the advancement made by the "contemptible little army" which set out to crush the German giant. We were from this time on equal to the Germans in guns, ammunition, men, skill and organization and I believe at this date the British Army has not reached its highest point of efficiency.

The supremacy of the air was definitely established and on very few occasions were German machines able to come over our lines despite the fact that our aerial squadron made thousands of flights well behind the German front lines.

To describe my arrival on the Somme front would be impossible, because my unit on coming over from England made the journey from

the French coast to the Somme front during the night, and after disembarking from the train "somewhere in France" we were marched in the direction of the battlefield illuminations far away on the horizon under the guidance of scouts. It was a spectacular scene to watch the grandeur of the lighting effects as we were drawing nearer to that Hell, with its indescribable noises which rip the atmosphere and sweep about in great tornadoes. There was one continual roar of guns; with each variety bellowing its particular noise. Far in the distance separate batteries firing salvoes could be distinctly heard and it seemed as if great iron doors were being banged nearby. Other shells screamed as they rushed madly on their death-dealing errand and the constant tattoo of the light field pieces helped the panorama before our eyes and into which we were going. The illuminating effects, with colors ranging between old rose and yellow, were extraordinary and were ever changing as the huge banks of smoke curled and lashed the very heavens. The air seemed full of gases, shells, fire, and moans; and as we stumbled on and on each man muttered not a word but all were wrapt in thought as to when

their turn would come. Sometimes we seemed to be in a sunken road, then in a trench and again on the level but whether it was the effect of the extraordinary shell fire I know not and at the time I cared less. My thoughts drifted homewards, but duty must be done and on we marched till we were deep in a communication trench and once in this, it was impossible to see over the top except where a stray German shell had chanced to drop. This communication trench must have reached for some considerable distance, or else it meandered about to deceive the Germans, because when we reached the end of it we were right in the front lines and now the fire from the German batteries seemed to rake every square yard of the ground. The trench was battered down and as fast as it was repaired other shells would destroy it, and on and on the monotonous work proceeded.

Our duties at this time were chiefly to relieve front line men and be in readiness for German attacks, and we were all resigned to whatever fate had in store for us. Many of the new men were now bleeding from shell fire whilst others were already dead—dead before even getting a shot at the bestial Hun “over the way.” We did

not have to wait long for action and consequently we were not afforded much time to learn the nature of the country ahead of us as it meant suicide to put one's head above the parapet, even for a second.

Days of bombardment followed, and then orders reached us that we were to go over the top and take "Monkey Farm," which we were told lay directly ahead of us. Both the British and Australian troops had failed to take this point and when the opportunity was given to the Canadians they gladly accepted of it and in a most spectacular bayonet charge the position was carried and the Canadians had another feather due to them; for the gallantry of these noble boys was never seen to better advantage than on this occasion when the Huns were completely routed with the cold bright steel which they fear so much.

The capturing of the Distillery in this region was another of those brilliant local victories. This building was used by the Germans for various purposes, and when it fell into our hands the Germans lost a fine observation post and consequently were forced back onto ground less suitable for defensive operations.



It was on September 15th, at the taking of Corsalette, that the British tanks made their first appearance on the battlefields in France and it was because of these that the Germans reeled under the spell of surprise. The troops accompanying the tanks marched behind them in a new battle formation perfected by the French, and as the deadly machines waddled along over the shell torn ground the boys behind watched carefully the effectiveness of the new instrument of death designed by the British. The character of the ground over which they were traveling saved them from shell fire because they were first high in the air and later were almost out of sight as they were crawling along the bed of a huge shell crater—but never did they stop in their course no matter what obstacles were placed in their path. On reaching the barbed wire I personally thought that the tanks would be in difficulties but to my surprise the camouflaged monsters just went ahead as if all was well, and when the first German trench was reached the tank ahead of me crawled over it and halted in the midst of a multitude of frightened Germans and bursting shells. The whole atmosphere was full of

smoke and a general haze seemed to envelope the work of the tanks. Germans in great numbers would now attack the tank and adopt all kinds of methods in order to stop its work but when the machine guns had cleared the immediate surroundings of Huns, the crew on the inside left-wheeled the tank and down the trench she went spitting death to every German in sight from the various guns operated by the crews. The sight of dying and dead Huns after the passage of the tanks is something to remember even to an old hand in the game of killing. Any Germans who escaped death from the fire from the tanks were immediately taken care of by the boys following in the new walking formation.

The Germans, realizing the hopelessness of their efforts against the tanks, were all excited and yelling in their strongest voice "Kammerad" but I feel that little mercy was shown them, as they adopt Red Cross and surrendering capers every day in order to catch the soldiers of the Allies. On the aerial men observing sufficient evidence to show that a general surrender was really meant, word was sent to the artillery

and the raining of our shells ceased in this particular section of the Hun trenches.

The objective in this move was Corsalette and just as we were reaching our goal I reeled over with a dizzy singing noise in my ears and I found myself actually lying on the ground and unable to get up, but I could not for the moment ascertain exactly the cause of this. I did not have to wait long, however, for I immediately felt the flow of warm blood over my chest and on looking down I observed where a bullet had pierced my uniform and entered my shoulder. On realizing my position I felt disappointed in not observing the fall of Corsalette under the good work of the tanks which will ever remain in my mind as the greatest surprise the German soldiers ever will get prior to their Kaiser suing for peace sometime in the future.

## "Over the Top"

Stand and Wait

Stand and Wait

The cold mud grips like the hand of fate.

The reeking ditch, like an open grave

Is there for the body they'll say you gave,

Gave like a hero for God and King!

Stand and Wait

Stand and Wait

A scuttling rat seeks hideous bait.

Does he sniff for the body you'll dearly sell

To speed the soul of a Hun to hell—

Sell like a Berserk to crush "The Thing"?

Stand and Wait

Stand and Wait

A Bird in the lost-land calls its mate.

See! Out there is the road at home

The kiddies are waving their Dad to come!

God! Gone! There is nothing but mud and death.

Stand and Wait

Stand and Wait

A pal curses soft that the signal's late.

Sick and dizzy, with flesh acreep

With reeling head and limbs asleep

Cringe like a coward and gasp for breath.

*Ah! There she goes!*

*The rockets flash,*

*Over we go and off with a dash;*

*Down in a shell hole to stick a Hun*

*Up again and off on the run,*

*Your pal's down beside you—*

*No time to stop*

*He gasps "Give 'em Hell boys"*

*God! see 'em drop.*

*On to "His" front line,*

*Steel to steel—*

*A jab in the breast and he's under your heel*

*Swing on the next one*

*Butt to the head*

*Yell like a wild man*

*Strike till he's dead.*

*Now for the "mop-up"*

*Grab for your knife;*

*This day, my lad's worth the rest of your life.*

W. M.

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## What It Feels Like to Go Over the Top

Can I put into words what it feels like to go "over the top"? There is crawling, goosy, hungry, sick feeling in the stomach,—a save-the-women-and-children and God-help me grip at the heart. The fear of breaking down clutches and numbs the brain like the icy hands of a grim angel. Have you ever been alone in an attic and waiting for your father to come home and give you the beating of your life? Did you ever see the only girl you could love going to the theater with another fellow? Did you ever sit (or is it stand) in the dock dumbly waiting for the jury to say whether you did or you didn't. Well, just roll these delightful sensations all into one; then plaster a few shovel-fulls of sticky, clammy mud around your legs and hands (not forgetting to save a little for your rifle), finish off neatly with a dash of ice and sleet from the North Pole and roll into an assembly trench in front of your own Front Line in No Man's Land. This is probably the

feeling you would have when waiting to "go over."

A few centuries pass. You notice such trivial things as that your puttees are getting frayed. Ah, well, all the easier to get a new pair when you go on leave. Leave! God save us! You poor miserable microbe, you who talk about "leave"; you are just awaiting your execution. Ages roll by. Some blasted fool is trying to smile; and what a smile.

More gloom, more wintry blasts, "more deeper depths;" swish, swish, swish—rapidly, say half a second apart "there she goes" whispers an old hand in your ear; "She's opened up." Someone from somewhere makes a sign and in almost a second you are actually "Over the Top" in No Man's Land with face set towards—well, whatever it happens to be. You are surprised to find that your blood still circulates, that you can leap, crawl and stagger onward, forward; and in what seems to be a minute of time you are close up to "his" front line. You are glad he is putting up a scrap. You flop quickly into a shell hole and peep cautiously over the edge. You are suddenly conscious that your comrades on your right and on your



left are doing the same. You don't worry; there is no time to worry; you are merely gauging your stride for that last leap. Just a minute. You are conscious of someone by your side for the first time. Why is he rolling his head around in that idiotic manner as though overcome by sleep? He is grinning; ah, there is a hole through his neck! By Jove, it's Jimmy! you are not shocked nor grieved, just surprised; the shock will come later. You find yourself moving again, and everyone else moving along the line—also Fritz is moving—and that as fast as fear and the first law of nature will carry him. Then begins the big hunt—but there's another story. The official reports will grandiloquently state that "We advanced on a front of etc." The Special War Correspondent will submit that our boys "magnificently stormed" such and such a place, but if you want it in the vernacular of the army you merely "went Over the Top."

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## A "Cushy Blighty"

The battle of the Somme had ended as far as I was personally concerned when I received a "Cushy Blighty" in the shoulder. Casualties were occurring at such an awful rate that the base hospitals were crammed full. The overflow of patients were sent to "Blighty"—England—and I was among these fortunate ones. Had my wound occurred during the Winter months I would not have had much of a chance to get beyond the base hospitals in France, but owing to the extraordinary number of hospital cases the hospital system became flooded long before the battle in which I was engaged reached its highest point. I was sent to No. 4 Stationery Hospital and from my stretcher the chateau where Lord Roberts spent his last hours was pointed out to me. From this point I was shipped to No. 8 Stationery Hospital at Boulogne, and it was here that I received my "Blighty ticket" after my wound had been examined and dressed. I was keen enough to appreciate the fact that I was booked for

"Blighty" and looked forward to the time when I would be spending ten whole days of final leave in London with nothing but my appetite and general wants to bother me. Crossing the channel was effected in quick time and I was told we sailed without lights because the German "subs." have no mercy even for hospital ships bearing distinctive signs for the purpose of identification, by night as well as by day. Shortly after arrival in Southampton I was on my way to Bearwood Hospital which is located between Workingham and Redding, England. This hospital was originally the mansion belonging to the editor of the London Times, but it was leased to the Canadian Government for the duration of the war. On entering the hospital for preliminary inspection of my wound I gleaned enough idea of the mansion to bring me back again to civilization and the beauties associated with it. A peep at the surroundings was sufficient to convince me that I was in an earth-paradise where blossoms seemed to send forth their fragrance in unlimited quantities. The serious cases at this hospital are located in the mansion itself, whilst those not so severe are located in the huts surrounding the main build-

ing and for that reason I was sent to a hut. I considered myself lucky indeed in ever "making the grade" and arriving in "Blighty." As the time went on I was permitted to stroll around at ease through the wonderful gardens, the magnificent chestnut grove and by the beautiful lake nestled away among trees, culled from the cold climates of the world. I believe that there was every plant that I am ever likely to know the name of, and it was pleasing to reflect that humanity throughout the world was not destroyed as it was in Northern France and Belgium.

Upon completion of five weeks in this hospital, I was sent to Epsom Downs Hospital for Convalescents, which, by the way, was a training station, to again knock the men into training after their spell in the various hospitals throughout England.

Prior to leaving this hospital I met hundreds of live boys eager for devilment and fun before returning to the dreary trench life "over there"; and as we were never permitted to leave the grounds without a permit, (and these were limited to two a week), it was interesting to be an observer on "off" nights and watch the various

dodges adopted by the boys in beating the Military Police and hospital attendants in order to attend some function previously arranged by some fair visitors. Men apparently fit and well and men on crutches would breeze around the verandahs and along the bottom fences of the garden "just for exercise" when the daylight was disappearing, and they invariably got over the boundary line even though it was six feet high and they had to always use crutches to amble through the wards. I guess we all did our share of this leave breaking at night and one or two nurses were good sports enough to look the other way when a patient was seen picking up a bundle of clothes out in the garden in order to avoid suspicion when leaving the ward for a "little walk." Some times some of the boys would be caught and paraded into the Superintendent's office the next morning, but the "Supts." were usually kindly and they realized how the boys felt about being penned in after being in the trenches for weary months, and usually "don't let it occur again" was the only reprimand administered to the wanderers.

It is customary to grant final leave for ten days to each Blighty case and believe me all

the boys look forward to this long spell "on their own hook" which is invariably spent in London seeing the sights of the great old city. When my time expired for hospital treatment, I received a railway ticket and funds to tide me over the ten days and I took in as much of the big city of London as I possibly could from the top of two-penny busses to the depths of two-penny tubes.

Being an Australian I naturally tried to get into touch with some Australian boys, so after inquiring for the Anzac Club, I was directed to Horseferry Road and after a little searching I suddenly was reading the words "Anzac Club" on a prominent sign quite close at hand. On entering the club I was greeted by the Australian accent and felt quite at home on hearing an excited Australian exclaim "Strike me pink" and "fair dinkum" in rapid succession during his conversation. On looking around the building I could not locate a single face that I could recognize, although I had spoken to quite a number of the lads, and feeling somewhat disappointed I shook hands with my hastily made acquaintances and wheeled round to go out when I recognized one of the original Anzac boys





General Bridge's Headquarters—Anzac Cove.



from my own Battery with whom I left Australia. As I had lost a lot of weight he did not recognize me, but on calling out his name and shaking him by the shoulder and telling him I was Fred Howard, his eyes lit up with their old time vim as he said "Strike me dead 'oward I didn't know ya, fair dinkum." It took us some time to talk over old times concerning the boys and their disappearance one by one. We talked of Generals, Colonels, Captains and all the rest of the higher ups and as my time was limited, I was just about to depart when I suddenly thought of my old friend "Roman Nose." On inquiring as to what became of Roman Nose, my pal grew suddenly quiet and modulated his voice quite distinctly as he slowly drawled out the answer I so eagerly awaited, which ran something like this: "Well, Howard, you left Gallipoli before the horses were landed but I was fortunate enough to be there through the whole of the campaign and believe me I well remember when Roman Nose led the way for the other horses who were too timid to descend the gang-way. He was in good form when he landed and he absolutely knew me when we met. Well, he was so beloved by our Major

that he just commandeered him for his own mount and Roman Nose knew what he was about when ridden by the Major 'Fair dinkum.' He was a show horse for fair; always sweating for action and foaming at the mouth like a wash tub. Well, one day as the Major dismounted, he let Roman Nose graze around, as he was reliable, and just then shells from the Turkish forts came over and landed quite near us. The Major, realizing that the horse might become frightened, called to me to hold him and just as I got hold of the reins, another shell came over and landed right by my side and immediately the explosion took place. Roman Nose was blown into two parts and I was left with nothing else but the forelegs and head attached to the reins."

As he finished this little story I felt a good deal more lonely as I thought of my old pal, and if I remember rightly I bid him the Australian farewell of "Hurrah." I strolled away from the building thinking of the great and brainy horse which paid in full the supreme sacrifice on the ill-fated peninsular of Gallipoli.

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## Weary Months in the Trenches

On completion of ten days leave in London, I journeyed to Southampton and embarked on a channel transport which carried me across to France in company with thousands of other men returning to the trenches. Shortly after arrival at a French seaport I went direct by train to the front, but found that my unit had been moved to the Vimy Ridge front. To actually reach the front line trenches entails a long midnight journey, single file, through miles of trenches and broken ground. One invariably knows when one arrives by the manner of the boys already there.

Drafted battalions are sent to the front lines for "tricks" of about twenty days, and this time is split up into three sections. Four days is the usual stay in the advanced positions; eight days in the supports, or second lines; eight days in the reserve trenches, or third line. Each of these lines has its different and particular duties to perform, except in case of emergency when every man throws his energy in the one direction—to stop the Hun. The chap in the front

line trenches has to keep Fritz under close observation, and he is the first man to strike a blow when opportunity offers. It is the duty of the front line men also to send out bombing parties and scouts, to maintain listening posts and keep watch at night from the firing step. In short, they have to perform the policing duties for the men in the rear.

The support trenches, or second line, calls for less arduous duties, and a man can feel comparatively safe when doing his eight days in this position. Their work chiefly consists in bettering the trenches or rebuilding them after they have been destroyed by shell fire from "across the strip." These men are of course always in readiness for attacks on a large scale.

The Reserve trenches, or third line, is farther removed from Mr. Hun, and, of course, conditions are very much better than in the two advanced lines. Classy looking dug-outs they have here, many of which bear witness to the decorative art of Thomas Atkins. The work of these third line men is to supply the men in front of them. Thousands of gas cylinders are handled by these boys; they meet the transports and take the supplies to the front



line in groups of from twenty to thirty under the direction of a non-commissioned Officer. They perform all the harder work, and at night nearly all the men are as busy as bees in working parties.

Real adventure is to be found only in the front line, in my opinion, for it is here that the trench mortars operate. The immediate neighborhood of these guns is dangerous ground, and their gunners are habitually referred to as the "Suicide Club," for as soon as one of these clumsy looking guns commences vomiting hell, look out! The Germans detest these guns and invariably grow furious at the boys when they commence firing. Their retaliation consists of an hour or two of severe bombardment, and this of itself would justify the name of "Suicide Club."

It is from the front line that wiring parties go out, protected by the machine gunners close at hand. From this point the Engineers often run the tunnels. By means of delicate instruments the other side can always tell when this is going on, and naturally to save themselves from being blown up, they strain every nerve to forestall or render useless the plans of these human moles.

So dangerous is the front line that many are killed in trying to enter it if the Germans once get the least clue of any movement of men, whilst others last just an hour or two before a shell or bullet comes along bearing as the soldiers have it, their "name and number" and another awaits the coming of the stretcher bearers.

These boys who are just "across the road" from the Huns, so to speak, are, of course, the first to suffer from gas attacks and liquid fire. When anything and everything is doing along the lines the front line men suffer most. Duty on the firing-step, with its two hours on and two hours off, and a similar length of time on listening-posts, is such a strain on one's system that I have witnessed many men totally collapse during the night and sent to "Blighty" white haired, with nerves so shattered that they are never allowed to return to the trenches.

### A Night Attack

It was the end of the Winter of 1917 that I was doing listening-post duty. The night was

quiet enough and the moonlight revealed the shell craters quite distinctly. The usual flares were being sent up by the Germans and everything was normal. Suddenly red lights were exhibited. This was a signal to their artillery to open fire, and, believe me, they did open fire. The air was charged with shell and shrapnel as they put across everything they had from machine-gun fire to big "minnies." On seeing the red lights I hurried back to the dug-out and gave the alarm to the men to "stand-to". Everyone was in readiness for the Hun as they waited. Just as suddenly as the fire opened it ceased. Such quiet did not, however, mean the passing of danger, but carried with it the threat of still greater danger. As every moment passed we expected death to come our way. Instead, however, of the Germans coming over in our direction, they attacked a Scottish regiment up the line, figuring apparently that such a manoeuvre of surprise would result most favorably. But the Kilties met them in a gallant rush with the cold steel, and once again the night was quiet except for the groans of the dying Huns up the line out in No Man's Land. Knowing that the missing

men must have been drawn from the German second lines, we sent over some of our best work to interrupt them; once again the night was quiet and in the morning, we knew, the people back home would read the commonplace news "everything quiet during the night—German night attack fails."

### **The Bombing Party**

The bombing parties which go over from the front line consist of 50 men, divided into two parties with a non-commissioned Officer in the centre. They proceed out into, and across No Man's Land under a barrage of our fire and as they near the German lines in single file each party is arranged as follows: First bayonet man, second bayonet man, bomb thrower, bomb carrier, a group of wirers and two teams (perhaps five men to a team) of machine-gunners. It is very exciting work. Nothing white is carried for fear of detection, even the men's hands and faces being blackened. On arriving at the Hun trench it is the duty of the first bayonet man to jump into the trench and clean up anyone and everyone there having a white face,

and I may say that Fritz often gets an exaggerated white face when the cold steel comes his way. Upon this work being completed, the bombers climb down into the trench and the machine-gunners take up positions to safeguard the work of these men and prevent interruption. Now the trenches are always constructed on geometric lines so as to protect as many men as possible from being killed by an exploding shell which would prove many times more deadly were the trenches laid out in straight lines. These divisions in the trenches are known as travises and bays and at their junction there is an angle of 90 degrees. Well, our men are now in the trench. As the corner is reached the men are very much alive to their duty, as a rush from a bunch of Germans might result in their all being killed. The first bayonet man holds his bayonet in readiness in such a way as to conceal the bright steel from the view of the Germans at the end of a bay, and the bomber with accurate judgment throws a bomb over into the adjoining bay. After the explosion takes place the party advances close on the heels of the first bayonet man, and any man who is still there is stuck with the cold steel, our

instructions being that there must be no doubt about the effectiveness of the work. This section having been cleaned of Huns, the first bayonet man advances to the next corner, and again the thrower places his faithful Mills bomb in the next bay and the chances are that anyone present will not outlive the explosion. Immediately the bayonet man again proceeds with his good work of sticking Huns, no matter whether they show fight or fright.

A bayonet man cannot entertain the idea of failure for one moment, as confidence in this work is everything. The good work continues in this way, and presently a dug-out will be reached, and again the bayonet man takes up his position as the thrower hurls maybe three or four bombs down into the dug-out. It is an observed fact that in any explosion men will always endeavor to reach the open air, and it is because of this natural instinct that the bayonet man can get in some of the excellent strokes taught him so thoroughly during his training. Along they go leaving behind only dead Germans, whilst the wirers hurriedly fill in the trench and convert it into a new portion of No Man's Land.



If any German trench is followed far enough it will lead to a communication trench and it is here that the two parties before mentioned split, and the non-commissioned officer takes up his position at the junction of the trenches till the allotted work of the men is completed under the cover of the machine gunners. When time is up—for only a limited time is allowed—the parties return to the non-commissioned officer, and at a given signal our barrage is thrown over on the adjoining German lines so as to keep them down till we return across No Man's Land to our own trenches. It was on the 8th of April, 1917, that I went over in this manner with a party of 50 men and returned, one of seven, after having cleaned up a goodly number of Huns who, as usual, were very much surprised at our impudence in trespassing in this way.

### **The Lost Hun**

On one occasion, whilst on duty in the support trenches, I was sent out with a ration party of twenty men whose duty it was to carry supplies to the men in the front line trenches. These

eagerly awaited messengers get their load from the transports at a given point behind the lines. The party in this instance arrived at the appointed place on time, strangely enough without any casualties. This is considered particularly dangerous work, and a stretcher-bearer always accompanies the party. On our return the men were counted in order to ascertain who was missing. To our surprise, on this occasion, we had a man too many. A closer inspection revealed a German among us who had apparently mistaken us for a German patrol party, and on approaching us had just simply fallen into line with the rest of the boys and marched straight into our trench to his own great surprise. We all laughed at the incident, and took the man down into the dug-out and treated him well, but I doubt if the same treatment would have been meted out to him twenty minutes previously out in the open.

The devices employed by the engineers, in their efforts to protect the men in the front line trenches and prepare their surprises for Fritz, are varied and often entertaining. For example, when the presence of gas is suspected in dug-

outs or when tunneling, a canary is pressed into service. If there is the slightest trace of gas in the air, the bird will collapse, very quickly, owing to the extreme rapidity with which it breathes. Mice are sometimes used in this way, but I believe canaries have proved to be the more reliable.

During the whole of my stay in the front lines, watching aerial activity was our principal form of amusement when things were slow. These ships of the air manoeuvre round and round and dart at each other at top speed, oftentimes the tips of their wings touching each other in their flight thousands of feet overhead. Shells are continually exploding underneath them, usually harmless, as it takes a remarkable shot from aerial guns for a direct hit. I have witnessed many, many machines coming down—some in flames, others carrying their dead aviator earthwards, as the mechanic endeavors to control the machine in its plunging flight. It is indescribably exciting to watch these deadly air duels of modern warfare.

The expression on the faces of the men in

the trenches is a study. The men of the first line have drawn faces, tired eyes sunk deep in their heads with the terrific strain of their duty. The men of the second line seem more relaxed in the main, while the third line men are almost normal in manner and appearance.

The new arrivals at the front line trenches are first greeted by the odor of the exploding chemicals released by enemy shells, and it requires but little more than this to tell men who have been there before that the position has been recently bombarded. Additional evidence of the fact is found in the smell of newly turned ground, and the battered condition of the barbed wire entanglements readily seen by the flaring light of the shells, all revealing to the midnight-relief men that they are actually in the front-line trenches. One experience in the front line trench makes one feel quite familiar with them everywhere for they all present much the same appearance.

To meet the conditions of trench life successfully, one would have to be a cross between a mole and a frog. It is practically always

wet underfoot. I could not get quite accustomed to living in a dug-out. Incidentally, (unpleasant as are these holes in the ground), it impairs the morale of the men to go out of range into one of these dug-outs as they are very reluctant to come out again into the trench. From the roofs of these places there is always water dripping, and the absence of anything like a bed and the presence of foul damp air make them in all very unattractive quarters. Rats and cooties are the only living things that enjoy these surroundings—the rats scuttle from beam to beam and burrow from dug-out to dug-out. They glean abominable provender in the black hours of the night, and boldly run across the sleeper's body or foot in their midnight scamp-erings. It is sufficient to say that the "cooties" are even more intimate.

When on the Vimy Ridge during the Winter of 1917, I successfully tamed a rat that I happened to come across when still very young. This rat, whom I nicknamed "Rato", had unlimited faith when I handled him. I could, with confidence allow him to crawl up my sleeve, but on attempting to remove him he usually objected. When "Rato" was coming to the height of

his fame, however, a German shell robbed him of his life and destroyed him so utterly that when I endeavored to find traces of him I was only rewarded by locating a piece of his wire cage.

Different types of men accept the front line existence in different ways. Men from damp countries are not so much affected as are the men from the drier parts of the globe. As soon as the Indian warriors arrive in Europe they are troubled with rheumatism in much the same way as are the Australians when placed under fire during the Winter months in France. Fortunately through the extent of the war, such men are used to advantage elsewhere, where men from England and France would be hard hit by the climatic conditions.

When in the trenches one must have complete confidence in the work of the other men. When men are thrown across No Man's Land under a barrage of fire, and the shells explode about 40 yards ahead of them, it requires a lot of nerve not to think of some of the artillery gunners being somewhat neglectful of their duties in adjusting the sights of their guns. The man on listening post duty must be trusted by the rest



of the boys, for this man (with the exception of the scout maybe) has the greatest responsibility in the protection of men in the front line against bombing parties sent over by the Germans; and so the whole army is linked together in belief and trust that the other fellow is doing his bit and doing it well. This feeling in itself is a great factor in modern warfare. Imagine two scouts crawling out into No Man's Land and one of them not trusting the other, or believing him to be unreliable in a tight corner; dear reader you can imagine it only, for it does not exist in the reality.

During the Winter months braziers were issued to us and a small portion of coal was allowed for each one, until the Germans learned of our trench comforts and immediately set about bombarding the dugouts from which smoke was streaming, until it was found that the smoke from the braziers proved to be as dangerous as the surroundings of the trench mortars. During these bombardments many men were imprisoned in collapsed dugouts, and and if they had the chance and presence of mind to don their gas masks, the chances were that they would be recovered alive; and if such

proved to be the happy result the survivors were invariably known as "dug-out." I knew three "dug-outs" at one time in my section of the front line trench which will give an idea of the frequency of these happenings. I was very much alarmed on one occasion as a German trench mortar of the larger calibre stove in a dug-out into which I was just proceeding, and had it not been for a cross beam, I would probably have been doomed. On a search being made among the men who usually occupied it, there proved to be a stoical Canadian logger imprisoned, so we immediately set to work to dig him out in the hope that his life would be saved. After about twenty minutes of strenuous work our picks pierced the fallen wall of his domicile and on making a sufficiently large hole to get in we found the logger still snoring peacefully and as for being alarmed at his position—well, I will let the reader judge for himself. He finished out his sleep and ever afterwards occupied his hole which he labelled "Logger's Rest."

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## Scouting in No Man's Land

My bush life and my natural inclinations gradually led me to believe that I was best fitted to be a scout, so when the opportunity came along I accepted it, and became a Battalion Scout.

In No Man's Land! God, what frail pen of men can fitly paint this indescribable land, with its thousands of horrors and its million risks each hour of the day! If one's feeble mind could glimpse the grandeur of heaven, then the same mind might conceive the opposite—the ghastly spectacle one is confronted with when once over the parapet. The loneliness of the place, a loneliness weirdly lighted by a thousand exploding shells, is unutterably cruel; the all-pervading stench of decaying bodies is abominable, and oftimes in the dead hours of the night one's hand sinks deeply into decaying forms—maybe the remains of a chum or possibly a venturesome German Scout “went west” at that spot. The fat rats scamper away in all directions—and it is not an uncommon occurrence for a rat to take cover under one's coat as

one flattens oneself to a crawling position, lest he be discerned by an enemy scout. There are millions of rats, and it is wonderful where they go to during the severe Winter months. The loneliness, the gloom, the rats, and the thousand other things to rob one of heart can be waved aside only by remembering that one's duty is a thing apart from oneself—because it is duty to humanity and to posterity.

Scouting demands a cool head in the face of the gravest dangers, but let him try who will, the coolest and the bravest, and if his heart does not climb up to his throat and pause unmercifully before again descending, then he is a superman.

Usually two Scouts go out together, and it fell to my lot to be closely associated with an ex-Northwest Canadian policeman, by name Douglas Grant. Many adventures we had together whilst ferreting out information. We were something more than brothers, because each relied upon the other till death itself was at hand, and if Doug said something was right then it was good enough for me, and if I believed a scheme was correct Doug never questioned my methods. We had a system of sig-

nalling by tapping on the ground, and at close quarters by finger taps in the Morse code on each other's hands, and so we made a good pair.

Before going over at night we always received our orders, but in executing them methods were left to us; and Doug and I doped that out just as Joffre and his staff planned their moves. We have been so close to the German lines that we would hear the Germans talking and working with their trench tools. In such a situation, your body goes tense and rigid, your nerves are taut, all your senses are marvelously alert—you are matching your wits with lurking death. Your heart pounds till you actually hear it, and your fancy leads you to believe that the other fellow's sigh sounds like a lion's roar. The hair bristles out on your body, and your morbid imagination sees the very posts fighting each other and hears the splash of a rat into a shell hole as if it were an ocean wave dashing up against a pierhead. The moan of a dying man comes to you, and you are sickened at the thought of a man dying in some shell-hole, and you not being able to find him; but, you think, maybe it is a German scout, and again your

heart is steel as you carry on with the good work.

When reading this in a comfortable chair after a good dinner, it is hard to imagine that No Man's Land is a reality, but in order to conceive what it is like I would recommend the following procedure. Have yourself locked in a haunted castle which has long since fallen into ruins, and have someone to bar the door and throw the key out of the window. Fill the place with rats which look questionably at you from their hind legs, and have the place bombarded incessantly whilst bloodthirsty Germans are ever waiting to play their machine guns upon you. Throw a few coils of barbed wire about and have the rain swept in gushes by a screaming wind which is not hindered by the presence of a roof, and replace the flooring with mud sometimes waist deep from which it is impossible to escape and you will have a mild representation of No Man's Land. I could continue by mentioning the cooties, wet clothes, and the absence of hot foods for two or three days previously, but would you dear reader really believe these things possible? Unfortunately they are too true.



How sickening it all is; how disgusting and how terrible. If Hell is a reality, here it is; for no worse tortures of mind or body could be placed upon man than those to be suffered by the boys out in No Man's Land. I am not speaking exclusively of Scouts at this point; but these crawlers of the night have good reasons to be looked upon as important men of the army.

One is liable to be burned by liquid fire, pierced by a bullet, torn by shrapnel, bayoneted or gassed at any moment; or maybe caught in mud so deep and sticky that it defies the strongest man to escape from its embrace. If a star shell goes up all must be motionless; otherwise it is certain death. If one is gradually sinking in the mud, then it is better to sink into the quagmire and hope to find a sound bottom before being totally swallowed up, than to give the Germans an opportunity to make a target of your body.

I have many times taken a chance on sinking in the mud in preference to being riddled by the Germans, and once solid bottom was not found till it was up to my arm pits in this germ-laden filth. My boots were full of water, my

uniform dragged heavily, and slowly but surely I was growing colder; yet I dared not make a sound lest the Germans hear my call. It is hard for me now, having fairly recovered health and strength, to understand the absence of my normal strength on that occasion as I stood helpless, hopeless, in that cold mud awaiting death. To get out without human aid was impossible, and I could only hope that my scout companion might come out to see whether I was still alive. I figured that before this was accomplished, however, many hours must pass; but I was a soldier of the Empire, and if I must die, then I would stand up under my burden like a soldier till death came to relieve me. Meanwhile, the sky was being continually lighted up by star shells, and I could hear the rap-rap-tap-tap of the machine guns, first on one side, and then on the other. I watched the explosions of our heavies far away in the distance, and wondered as to the accuracy of their fire—anything to keep my mind away from the fact that I was a doomed man. Two hours passed—they seemed like centuries; my arms refused longer to hold my rifle above the mud; I decided to let it sink and stand on it; then folded my arms

in order to keep my wrist watch going and keep track of the time. Time?—what had I to do with the hours of the night except to know how long I could live in this position? And yet I knew that 2:30 that night our barrage would be sent sweeping over so that a wiring party might go about their perilous labors; beyond this I was not interested. Two-thirty came, and our barrage went over, but no party ever came near my position; so I gave up hope and resolved upon surrender. I was looking back over my life when the Germans opened fire; now shells were falling all around me; but I still reckoned on being fortunate enough not to be sent “West,” when crash;—the most terrific explosion I had ever heard occurred just 50 feet away. It shattered the very air, and the ground with its five feet of mud trembled as I had never felt it tremble before. Something blinded me. I could not hear. I felt sick, dizzy, in a swirl of faintness and blackness, I felt something going out of me as it seemed. What could it be and what was the cause of this horrible sensation? My God, the mud and slime are moving, and I am carried along with them! I am still up to my arm pits; my sight

returns a little; I am no longer totally deaf; I am glad in a way that something is doing, but what really is the cause I know not. On I go. What was that I shoved with my foot? It is not too late to fish for it. Then again I feel it; and now once again. I reach down to my knees in order to grasp at anything solid that may offer itself; to my surprise my hand comes in contact with a mass of tree roots and I clutched at them as a drowning man does at a straw. On bringing them to the surface I find they are attached to larger roots. I grip one of them and pass it about my shoulder in order to be moved no further. Meanwhile the semi-liquid flood of ooze flows on. I know not how many cubic yards, but it is going somewhere, and I dimly think of the possibility of its exhausting itself in time. Another explosion occurs; and now the mud moves more rapidly, and I can feel that it is gradually subsiding, and I shout with joy. Down, down, down it goes, inch by inch, till it is down to my middle. Now I cannot move for weakness, but down, still further down, the mud goes. When it is knee deep, I am still unable (for lack of strength) to struggle against it. I am almost frozen and quite

exhausted. It is still dark. No star shells are going up, and I cannot see where or how I stand; but I am still alive and glad to have a sporting chance of life.

I hardly knew when the mud got down to my ankles for my clothes were soaked with the vile stuff, and I was actually still waiting for the mud to drift away when it was only over my shoes. I felt as helpless as a child, but how glad I was I can never record. I now had to make a final effort to get out of this mess, and following the tree roots up to a stump I sat upon it momentarily till I took my bearings. I was in No Man's Land and had a chance for my life if I could keep alive for half an hour or so; so off I plodded in the direction of a little higher ground, and in a few minutes I was crawling up a bank on all fours. On and on I plodded. Nothing could be seen. A dense fog veiled all the ground. If only a star shell would go up occasionally and shew me the way to my trenches. Suddenly I stumbled upon some barbed wire. Was it the Germans'? If it was I was done for. I groped for the nearest support and my heart leaped with joy when I found that they were wires edging the British

trench. Why, I was really near home; I proceeded to crawl along slowly, stealthily, silently; for were I to make a noise I might be shot as this, possibly, was some other regiment's ground. On I went along the barbed wire till I came to an opening, and here I was home—home in the safety of a shell broken trench; and on whispering to the guard at the sap I was welcomed with "We all thought you were dead." The boys joked at me, and I really was so overjoyed to be back that I tried to see the humor of the situation. My Officers eyed me up and down, but I could not do more than shew my weariness; so I was carried along a communication trench to a dug-out where my clothes were stripped off, dry ones put on over a muddy skin, and a pot of rum poured down my throat. I did not need anything more to put me fast asleep in a bed made of a couple of bags and poles, from twenty to thirty feet under the surface of the ground.

I awoke from my slumbers twelve hours afterwards with an Officer standing over me and smiling, and after some hot soup and another rifle had been handed to me, I was ready for further duty. When the Officer heard



my tale he laughed at the idea of the mud. I was confident of my story, however, so the next night I said I would crawl out in the direction of where I was held up by the mud and investigate the place. I went over as do all scouts—like the hands of a clock—and went off in the right direction. At last I came to the bank up which I had climbed on all fours and then I could see the tree with its life-saving roots. Not satisfied with this I went on, and there right ahead was a hole made by a Jack Johnson shell which would accommodate a village church, and into which the mud had poured. High up on the side of this huge hole there was a second crater which was caused by the second explosion that occurred near to me and because of this, I could plainly see, the mud flowed more rapidly, as several tree stumps were still hanging by their roots which partly blocked the flow of mud during the first portion of my imprisonment.

Any sound out in No Man's Land causes it to be raked with machine gun fire, and it is the scout's duty to mark the points from which this fire comes so that the artillery can smash down the enemy defenses on the morrow.

When the German wire entanglements are reached the worst job of all is finding a lane through them and often one has to cut one's way through. "It is a job calling for absolutely no nerves at all but all sorts of nerve," one man has aptly said of the scouts' duties. One is sometimes close up under a German machine gun, another time caught by a star shell, and then if the natural impulse to lie down is obeyed, another man is listed as missing. Any movement in such a situation is self-betrayal; and if the star shell is between the Scout and his own trenches he must even hold his breath, for one's body in such cases is distinctly silhouetted against the brilliant light.

Of course the Germans send out their scouts too, into No Man's Land, and there is always the possibility of meeting them. If so met they must be bayoneted. A shot from a rifle would attract attention, and perhaps cost one's life, so I always took care to use the steel on these occasions.

One cannot take chances in the performance of this duty, as the German sometimes dresses in a dead enemy's uniform and tries to pass himself off as one of the Allies' soldiers; but

this trick is rarely played as our instructions are based on experience and can be summed up concisely: "Don't take chances with dead men."

Some of these German scouts are nervy fellows it must be allowed. Once I happened to notice on leaving a sap which lead into the "unowned ground," a coil of wire lying nearby, and after carrying out my scouting duties, when returning I noticed that the coil of wire had disappeared, to my astonishment, for I knew that the wirers had not been out that night. I inquired of the sentry whether anyone had been there and he said "No." I then told him about the coil of wire. He plainly thought that I was suffering from a too active imagination, but on reaching the ground where the wire had been, I at last perceived a peg driven into the ground, and a star shell shewed that there was writing on it. I removed the peg and presented it to an interpreter in the front line for translation, and he said the German words meant: "The Kaiser sends his best regards to Roumania." This was indeed the work of a very daring fellow. My pal Grant levelled matters up with Mr. Fritz, however, by sticking his scout the next night out in No Man's Land.

When scouts crawl over the parapet at the appointed time, the artillery fire ceases so as to enable the men to crawl about in comparative safety whilst performing their tasks, and again opens fire at an appointed time. This time is of course known to the scouts in advance, and should one happen to be a few minutes late the chances are very slim of his ever reaching his own trenches again. On one occasion Doug's watch and mine were three minutes apart, but I was sure that my timepiece never lost a second and that Doug's was fast the three minutes. Doug was convinced by my signals, but alas the delicate machinery of my watch must have been injured in some manner for the fire opened up prior to our return to the sap. Shells fell all around us and the ground was turned up again and again exposing to view the German dead who had been buried on three different occasions. We managed, however, to crawl back to the sap but always had the correct time afterwards.

Necessarily a scout is an expert with the bayonet, because he is usually used as the first bayonet man on a bombing squad, and on his performance of this work depend many lives.

He also has to possess a thorough knowledge of the trenches, for he is invariably used to bring into the front line fresh drafts of men from the billets. These moves are always made at midnight without the aid of a light, and when it is remembered that in freshly captured land the trenches may even have a communication trench leading into the newly made No Man's Land, it can easily be seen how essential it is that the trenches be known to him. A scout is sometimes even used as a "runner," a carrier of despatches, and must therefore have a very keen sense of direction. All in all, the scout is a specialist in his particular branch of army work and seldom changes to anything else, when once he has commenced in this line, unless it be for promotion.



C. LEYSHON-WHITE  
15  
ANZAC

Whilst seated one day in my  
dug-out,  
Weary and ill at ease,  
I saw a gunner carefully  
Scanning his sunburnt knees;

I asked him why he was search-  
ing,  
And what he was looking for,  
But his only reply was a long-  
drawn sigh  
As he quietly killed one more.  
Am. Park.



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## BILLETS

Billets! I chuckle at the thought which arises in the minds of those in the United States when this word is mentioned. Most people think billets are rest houses where tired soldiers may lie down and rest peacefully, undisturbed by shellfire; where luxuries are to be found and little cots with white spreads are tidily kept by obliging souls.

Here is what I found when in billets. A billet is an enclosure of any kind, of any age and of any construction. It may be an improvised pig sty, a French barn or an obsolete chicken pen long since deemed useless. On the floor is plenty of straw and on this the weary men lie down and enjoy the sweet sense of relaxation and rest that comes to tired limbs and expended energies. It sounds well even at this point, but do not overlook Mr. Cootie with his ever present desire to bore holes into your anatomy. This pest has caused more sleepless nights than all the German cannon, and is yet uncontrolled by science. Someday billets will not be loathed

as they were when I was in them, but until the vermin question is met and firmly mastered, I feel sorry for the boys who try to sleep with such bed-fellows. They decide to dine immediately one lies down to sleep, and of course sleep is out of the question for most men under such circumstances. With poor facilities for bathing and a lack of clean clothes it is impossible for one to dream of these multitudinous insects ever being curbed by ordinary means, and so the soldier awaits the time when science will solve this problem and remove the plague.

Twelve days are usually allowed one to recuperate in the billets and were it not for continual searchings at night and morning I doubt if I ever would have had a decent night's rest in the billets. Cootie hunts are regular occurrences; all the men line up and endeavor to clean their garments of the pests. It is disgusting and sickening to the new men, but it is absolutely essential to sleep and contentment even of a third-rate kind.

Scratchers are carried by some men in order that they may reach any portion of their bodies that may be attacked by the cooties; and if I remember rightly these pliable sticks were held

in high esteem by their possessors. To steal one meant insult to its owner.

There's no idle time over in France, and the work allotted to the billeted men is that of constructing ammunition dumps, digging drains for the engineers to lay out a water system, and performing other work around about deemed necessary and helpful to the great effort.

Month after month I went in and came out of those trenches, and into billets and out of billets, and often I questioned which was the worse—front line trenches or billets. The great thing in billets is that eating conditions are much better, and regular meals of a fairly good variety are served.

Billets are very interesting marks for the German gunners, and considering the almost unlimited range of gunfire, one is not safe even 10 or 12 miles behind the front lines; indeed, it is not infrequent that one is bombed from his rest house—and pest house—by such enemy fire. I have witnessed fire on billets miles behind the front line and in some cases seemingly under the cover of a hill. The Germans get the range from their aircraft and once this is secured there is sure to be something doing in the im-

mediate future—all going to show that there is absolutely no place immune from danger “over there.”

One of the pleasantest moments of life in the billets is that when leave is granted. On such occasions the men would divide up into their various groups, machine gunners by themselves, bombers, bayonet men, scouts, etc. The scouts were fortunate enough to have a very fine quartet; and music along the road and a glass of vin rouge or vin blanc at the end of the jaunt at one of the village estamenets made such little trips an agreeable variation of the monotony of billet life.

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## Vimy Ridge

We arrived in billets at Monstaloy and remained there for a week. During this time we engaged in hard work such as unloading shells from the motor transports and constructing ammunition dumps for use during the coming battles. Anything unusual always attracts the attention of the German air-craft, and on their planes seeing us from overhead, they were plainly very anxious to get further information as to our activities. Consequently aerial battles were frequent and the Germans were finally beaten off, not however, before they had photographed the operations. Fritz always acts with promptness, and the photograph must have just about been developed and enlarged when they brought into operation an armoured train which fired shots from very heavy cannon endeavoring to locate and destroy the dumps. It happened that at this moment when the end of everything including our lives seemed to be at hand, our Battalion was in billets. One shell from the armoured train fell about 20 yards from the

huts and exploded. A few moments before, the boys had been preparing to leave the billets that night; some were sewing on buttons, some were playing cards, whilst others were loafing and resting prior to their departure. Amongst the men who were present was a pal of mine who was scheduled for leave, but owing to delay in the arrival of the relief trains he could not do otherwise than wait till the service was again reorganized. When the explosion of this shell occurred my pal was reading a week-old newspaper in company with another Canadian on a top bunk. Now, some of my equipment was unmarked with my regimental number, so finding that I did not have an indelible pencil, I climbed down from the middle bunk and asked one of the boys for the loan of his pencil. I was thinking of my regimental number, and wanted to write it down. I had walked only a few yards when the death-dealing shell exploded, and had I remained where I was I could not have escaped being killed instantly, as a large piece of shrapnel came through the side of the wall and passed over the spot where I had just been standing. I could trace the course of the shell by the hole on the other side of the



hut; and I have always considered that that trivial want of a lead pencil saved my life on this occasion. The explosion threw the men into confusion. After I had recovered from the shock I noticed that a man who had been pulling on a pair of pants had his arm blown off, and my pal who was scheduled for leave was mortally wounded. He climbed down from his bunk with his shoulder badly torn and his arm gone. He was a brave boy for he immediately called for a stretcher—when one was procured he was fast dying. "Good bye, boys, I'm done," he said, and that was the end. Other casualties resulted in other huts, but I did not have nerve enough to ascertain the facts.

Our Officers, realizing that the Germans had our range ordered us to scatter out in order to prevent further heavy casualties amongst us.

## **Rehearsal of the Battle of Vimy Ridge**

The next morning we were marched to Rambert. Certain Divisions of the Canadians, after resting for a week, were told off in order to rehearse the taking of Vimy Ridge. Aerial

photographs were secured of this front and a similar piece of ground was selected near this coal-mining town of Rambert, located near Calais. Here we saw the strange sight of peasant women ably performing the work of men in the flourishing coal industry. Men were billeted in that little town which gave us all an opportunity to again restore our clothes to cleanliness and free our bodies from the mud and vermin that came with months of isolation.

1200 yards of this ridge, closely resembling Vimy Ridge, was measured off and laid out with the aid of surveying instruments, and each man was allotted to a definite position and had to adhere to rigid regulations looking to the capture of the German lines. The new French methods of going over the top were adopted on this occasion, which meant that the men were to walk behind the barrage of artillery fire. Machine gunners were taught to carry their guns on slings and for two weeks daily we rehearsed the taking of this German stronghold which for so long had proved to be a thorn in the side of the Allies.

New formations were just being developed at this stage of the war and it was in the

taking of Vimy Ridge that the new methods were tried out by the Canadians. There were few idle moments at Rambert you may be sure! We all had to continue in the practice of our special and allotted part and this proved to be of greatest value to us all when it came to the execution of our ambitious undertaking.

On leaving the French town of Rambert many of the residents were crying to see us go, and had we Canadians been of their own blood we could not have been treated better. The majority of the men of this town were in service or had died in action, consequently poverty here was more pronounced, and so on leaving, each of the "highly paid Canadians" subscribed liberally in recognition of the kindness they had enjoyed. We were all sorry to march out of Rambert and leave its comforts behind us.

### Vimy Ridge

The breathing spell in the little town of Rambert had done us all good, we surely needed such a change, but now that the time for the taking of the Ridge was approaching it was necessary for us to return to the trenches for

the purpose. From Rambert we marched to Monstaloy, and from there we marched in the direction of the trenches along the road we had previously travelled.

The boom from the distant guns could be plainly heard as we proceeded and the illumination from the bursting shells could be seen far in the distance. As we proceeded our officers divided us into groups of from thirty to forty men, and at the various points along the road where the Reserve trenches connected with the highway each of these units was placed under the supervision of a guide, to be taken to the front lines, where our positions were well known to us because of the many rehearsals we had just completed. We all knew that we were to go over the top within a week or so but the exact date was kept a profound secret, and it was not until the opening of intensive bombing by our artillery, which was located far in the rear, that we knew when we were likely to go over the top. This bombardment continued for many days and it is remarkable how many shells can be put over on the German lines in an hour or two. The air seemed literally full of shells.

On the 8th of April orders were given that bombing raids were to go over and disorganize the German front lines and also to cut the wire for the boys were going over the following morning.

I was one of the party of bombers and on returning to our lines, after having inflicted heavy losses on the Germans, we learned that all were to go over the top at 5 o'clock in the morning. We had not long to wait as it was very late when we came back from bombing out the Hun trenches.

At 4:30 A. M. all the men were assembled, in the order which was at this time so familiar to us, so that all would be in readiness at five o'clock for the big move, which was to carry one of the impregnable positions the Germans prided themselves on possessing. We all knew on this occasion that there would be thousands of disasters and as the weary minutes dragged on and on my heart seemed to turn to lead and swung slowly and solemnly. I believe I was not alone in this feeling for it was quite evident that within the next half hour or so many of us would be dead or permanently crippled. The noise from our own artillery was deafening, it

was useless to try to talk to the man next to me. The only consolation I could find was in thinking of predestination. Centuries seem to pass whilst waiting to go over the top as we all realized that a very difficult job was ahead of us and every effort was necessary to make a victory of the undertaking.

Precisely at five the roars of the cannons ceased and a comparative calm followed but this seemed just as objectionable to my ears after the indescribably nerve racking explosions. Perhaps it was sudden contrast, but the cessation of fire seemed to bother my nerves quite a lot. There was no time for speculation now, whatever happened, as the signal was given for the boys to go over the top.

The air was charged with fumes from the shells and the peculiar smell from the freshly turned soil with its gases buried on previous occasions seemed to create a haze as we slowly followed the instructions we had previously been given on the rehearsal ground. The very ground was very familiar to us except for the shell holes being continually made and transformed by the shells from the German batteries far in the distance. They knew by this time





On the 9th day of April, 1917, just before the Canadians made their immortal dash for Vimy Ridge, the great news came that America had entered the war. Great was the rejoicing among these battle-tried veterans and particularly among the sprinkling of American boys who had gone across the border to Canada to enlist with them. The news was the principal topic of conversation through the long night—those horrible hours waiting for the signal to “go over the top.” At last the signal came and as we prepared for the dash, I saw one of the men in my section, an American, reach under his blouse and draw forth a close folded silk flag—he opened it with a shake, fixed it firmly to his bayonet and over he went, with a cheer from his pals, the first to carry the stars and stripes into battle against the Hun—and he carried them over the ridge to victory.

There was another unusual feature about this incident, for it was probably the first time in twenty years that colors of any kind had been carried into battle in the British Army. The carrying of colors was forbidden by Field Marshal Wolsey in 1897 and in spite of many efforts to have it recognized again the prohibition still stands.



that we were making a supreme effort to capture the famous ridge and their only alternative was to pour down on us as many shells as possible.

Our own barrage was working perfectly; the explosions were occurring about 50 yards ahead of us as we marched along in scattered formation and never a German ventured to show himself under these circumstances as it meant certain death to the inquisitive one.

The barbed wire entanglements were already cut for our entry the previous night and little difficulty was experienced by the men in advance who were attending to the killing of the men in the first trench, for there remained few who were capable of a stubborn resistance.

Just at this moment a Hun shell came over with my name and number painted on the side of it, for after it exploded I was despatched into oblivion and my next recollections are recorded in the following chapter.

The 1200 yards allotted to the boys was captured but not without sanguinary losses to our troops, yet it was a relief to learn that the Huns suffered very many more casualties than did the Canadians on the occasion which rightly deserves a place among the most gallant attacks

made by the Canadians in this Great War.

The dash and courage of the Canadians on the various occasions when they have been up against superior numbers, is something that has to be seen in order to be appreciated to the full extent and as I am an Australian I can justly compliment the Canadians for their wonderful endurance and fighting qualities.

It was in this battle that General Byng came before the public eye as a strategist who will count in ultimately pinning down the Hun to the limitations of his own boundaries in a fitting style.

This was the third occasion when I was disappointed in failing to see the ultimate capture of our objectives but I have to be contented with the lot that has fallen to me.

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## Hospital Life

How peculiar it is to awaken from a heavy sleep in a strange room, away from the dreadful noise of cannon; to be free from vermin and to actually be in white sheets spread over a comfortable bed. "Whatever could have happened to me," I wondered; because the last I knew I was running "Over the Top" and now I was actually in a suit of blue pajamas and I smiled as I concluded that I had suffered some slight wound. Why, I was home again, it seemed; but where? I gazed around the large room in which I was lying, and there seemed to be an endless number of beds; so I said, "Howard, you're in hospital." I called to a walking patient who was nearby and asked where I happened to be and he said "Boy, you're in Blighty." I resolved to await the arrival of the nurse and get full particulars, and when a Sister came along I asked her what was the matter with me. She explained that I had been hit with shrapnel and two pieces had penetrated my head—one in front and one behind,

and was probably also suffering from shell shock. It was all interesting; but so queer to be away from the shell-torn battle front and lying in a comfortable bed once again. But I certainly was in bad shape for all my nerves were jumping unmercifully. Just at this time I had a relapse (losing my memory for many weeks), and when consciousness came to me again I was still jumping with nerves and unable to move in any desired way. A few minutes after coming to, I was being fed by a nurse—I was actually drinking some rich hot soup from a silver spoon and my hands were free from mud. This sure was the Blighty I had been hearing of for so long. I could not believe that anything was the matter till I endeavored to feel my head with my hand. To my surprise I was powerless to feel anything although I was sure my head was all there; still I was comfortable, and that, to a man recently from the trenches, is a great thing.

It was 11 o'clock in the morning when I first saw the doctor on his rounds. When he came to me he removed the bandages from my head, and then I knew from his actions that I had been hit. I had been unconscious for hours



and during my stay in dreamland I had been thoroughly rid of vermin and washed free of trench mud; but "What of it all?" I thought, as I lay in that truly beautiful cot offering such supreme rest and comfort. This hospital I afterwards found to be the Royal Victoria Hospital of Southampton, England.

For three weeks more I enjoyed the treatment at the hands of the tender nurses, and was deeply impressed by their attentiveness to their many patients—some of whom did not know the nature of their requests because of mental derangement. In this hospital there is accommodation for five thousand cases, and hundreds of wounded men arrive daily whilst a corresponding number are daily despatched to other hospitals, where their particular cases are best attended to—or, it may be, because of the prospect of early recovery.

At the end of three weeks I was transferred to Epsom Downs hospital, conducted under the auspices of the Canadian Government. Soon I was again transferred, in rapid succession to Orpington, Kent, Warrington, Lancashire, and from the last hospital, to a transport which carried me across the Atlantic to the city of

Halifax, Nova Scotia. I was hurried away from Halifax, and was still in possession of my label and ticket to Cobourg, Canada, when the coastal city was destroyed by the terrific explosion, so I consider myself fortunate in escaping that terrible calamity.

During my stay in England I was progressing very satisfactorily when an air raid took place. Owing to the condition of my nerves, unstrung by shell shock, aggravated by the two shrapnel wounds in my head, I suffered a total collapse, and after that day for approximately four weeks could not stand upright.

At the hospital at Epsom Downs I met an Australian Sister who used to attend the same school as myself in Victoria, Australia, and I shall not deny that I received extra special treatment during my stay in her ward.

To preserve the high spirits of the men in the English hospitals all kinds of entertainments are furnished. During my stay there were two concerts a week, and movies every night, and it was amusing to see the manner in which the various patients arrived. The blind pushed the chairs of the disabled, and the one occupying the means of conveyance would direct the

pusher by "hard to the left," "Steady, steady," or "Right ahead" and so on until the auditorium was filled with cripples in chairs or men otherwise incapacitated. We were a motley gang in our blue uniforms and red ties, but nevertheless the concerts were always enjoyed in full measure by the audience.

The indescribable sufferings of many of the hospital patients would fill a very large book indeed, so I will not attempt compiling a hospital book or cataloging the various cases. The shell-shock cases often result in the loss of reason, speech, voice and equilibrium. Many of these cases in their extreme agony are pitiful to look upon. Thousands of such nerve-shattered men have literally no reasoning faculties whatever for the time being, and, as it takes weary months of nursing and unlimited treatment to restore a high percentage of these men, one can easily imagine the amount of hospital work that is entailed. It is generally recognized that whatever faculty shell-shock robs a man of, he may be restored by another shock or extreme mental excitement. I have known of speechless cases having speech restored after an aerial raid over London. I was present at

a boxing contest during which a very interesting incident of this sort occurred. A returned soldier who had lost his speech was present. As the fight progressed a point of very great importance was reached; the tide was turning in favor of one of the contestants. This speechless soldier in his excitement leaped from his seat, and with a great desire to see his man win, opened his mouth to shout—did shout; his speech was restored. The cure of battle deafness is becoming a common occurrence in England, and what strides medicine and surgery are making in this way is yet not realized in many parts of the world. Nothing, however, can surpass the wonderful endurance of the nurses and their never-failing devotion and tender care of their patients. It is in this service that women raise themselves to the ideals seldom dreamed of in other callings.

The regularity of the hospital hours troubled the new arrivals very much, for after 6 A. M. all were wide awake and washed and some perhaps were undergoing walking treatment. Men whose legs had stiffened, and men whose arms had become set in one position, had to undergo rather peculiar treatment in order to restore the

use of their limbs, and when watching these patients exercising their stiff legs I always thought of little children learning to walk.

The modern idea is to keep the mind of the patients occupied and off their troubles, and all kinds of methods are adopted to accomplish this end. Blind men are taught basket-making and other similar work; lame men make everything from toys to mats, and sometimes extra clever men make leather bags of a very creditable kind.

It was in the Hospital at Warrington that a Board of Doctors said that I was to be placed in "E" category, which meant that I was to be discharged from the army if I recovered sufficiently; and it was because of this fact that I was returned to Canada to "make the grade"—a process in all occupying eleven months.

My treatment alone must have cost a small fortune for it called for hot and cold baths for hours each day, hot running-water baths, electrical treatment, and other methods for the cure of nervous disorders by means of static electricity.

The cases just about to be discharged are always envied by the boys not yet well enough to walk about, but patients just able to walk have

very little use for men sufficiently well to be able to slip over the back fence and enjoy a little party given by some kind lady friends.



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## Conclusion

Might will never batter down the spirit grounded in truth; even though gloomy moments may temporarily cloak the sun from our view and pacifists and like decadents prompt us to despair because of their childish theories and half-baked ideas of strategy. I know by experience the white hot spirit which feeds the enthusiasm of the boys holding on to the thin lines over there on the battlefields whose unwritten incidents of sacrifice and brotherly love are without parallel. The ancients bled whilst courting fame, but men today are bleeding and suffering because of love—that brotherly love considered utopian and impractical till this great war engulfed the world. Personal gain and the show of medals mean little to me; I know the great mission of my life is in the main fulfilled, in contributing my mite to the fight for posterity and humanity. To have helped curb the Berlin Brute in real action is a fitting introduction into other worlds. The thousands of men who laid down their lives for YOU and

those yet unborn have few equals in the whole realm of martyrdom, and who that has actually been months in the front line trenches can justly record the thousands of incidents illustrating the new factor in the world of today, which, for want of better words, I will call "brotherly love." Now its a man with an arm blown off trying to rescue his dying pal out in No Man's Land; tomorrow it is the sight of a mortally wounded Officer commanding his men to prop him up in the trench that he may still urge them on; and thus it is that one gains the conviction that something new is present in our midst which fills the timid with indescribable pluck and urges all on and on making no account of sacrifices and displaying a heroism that in most instances must go unrecorded. There's no lack of spirit in the trenches; men dismiss the presence of enemy machine guns peppering the ground all around them in the performance of their duty, and all are trying to win out for this great cause, and if they have a little time to spare then it is bestowed upon the men who are "down" from wounds. The spirit of the boys will never waver unless from neglect of those at home far away from the zone of

danger. If those at home were imbued with the same ideas that the boys have in the field, then one could wave aside all ideas of failure and look forward "to the day" when brute force will be whining at the feet of the Allies' Generals and pleading for peace; but before this is accomplished all must curtail wasted energy, help in the direction where one's abilities are of most use, and have that determination which knows not defeat.

The whole family of pacifists are German sympathisers or at least Germany's abettors, and if there are men under the protection of the flags of the Allies who are unwilling to contribute their services in one form or another, may God hasten the day when these burdens may be lifted from our backs, and rewarded according to their deeds!

The Germans are using every vile means to further their ends, and we must offset this by white-hot loyalty in this the greatest struggle the world has known for the freedom of all peoples and the protection of the weak.



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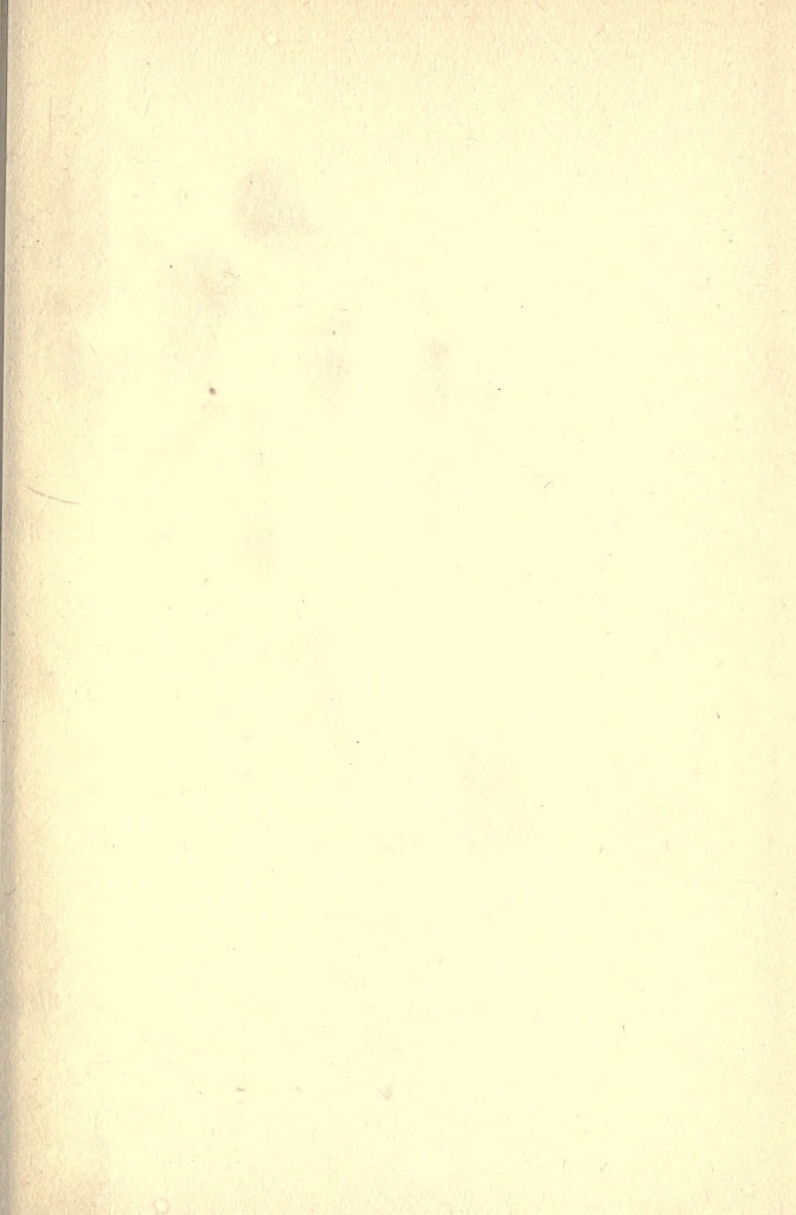
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